

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

THE UNFASHIONABLE CHRIST

Al Brown

INTRODUCTION

When God came in the flesh, the world saw man as God wanted all men to be. Jesus was the perfect man. His character comprised just those traits ideal man should have. If men aspire to be perfect, they have but to observe and emulate what Christ thought about, the ways He talked and what He had to say, and what He did. This includes those negative qualities so politically incorrect to those of any age who walk in darkness. Worldly wisdom had so warped man's understanding and judgment that the moral attributes found in Jesus' life were the very traits men despised most—and still do.

VAIN REASONING AND BLINDED TO THE TRUTH

By inspiration, the apostle Paul explains why this is true:

They ... became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and ... changed the truth of God for a lie. ... Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting (Rom. 1:21-23, 25, 28).

Another great truth helps us understand why worldly people have such warped concepts of what is right and wrong—correct and unacceptable. The god of this world (Satan) has blinded them to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul wrote

about the man of sin (an agent of Satan):

...whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 The. 2:9-12, *KJV*).

THE DIVINE CHARACTER

Because Jesus is unfashionable to worldly men whose ideals, morality, and wisdom are flawed, they try to recast His character into their own mold. This is not the first time men have tried to force deity into conforming to man's marred standard of what they think is the perfect man. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God charged the people of Israel with doing the same thing: **"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself"** (Psa. 50:21).

Jesus' character traits He enjoins His followers to assimilate in their own lives have never been popular with people estranged from God. Those qualities valued by God are the ones most despised by the world, but they are the very attributes that distinguish Christians from other men and make them as novel as Jesus was. Paul wrote, concerning those at odds with God:

...(They) became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
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Editorial...

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MAN'S FREE-WILL

This immediate direct relationship of the Holy Spirit on the apostles enabled them to do the work that was theirs alone to accomplish. They could not have done their ambassadorial work without such direct supernatural help. With the foregoing in mind, we begin our study.

THE DIRECT WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH THE APOSTLES

This direct involvement of the Holy Spirit in the apostles was the “Comforter,” translated from the Greek word *paracletos*. This is the word that Jesus used in describing the relationship and work of the Holy Spirit with His apostles. And, Jesus promised the *paracletos* only to His apostles— John chapters 14, 15, 16. Because Jesus would return to heaven when He completed the redemptive work that He alone could do, our Lord sought to help settle the troubled hearts of the apostles. He wanted them to know that they would not be left alone. He said to His apostles, “**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: ...for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you**” (John 14:16, 17). It is self-evident that it is impossible to have “**another Comforter**” without at least one other “**Comforter**” preceding it. The “**Comforter**” on whom the apostles had depended and who would need to be replaced by “**another Comforter**” was Jesus Himself. The other “**Comforter**” whom Jesus promised to the apostles would dwell with them and be in them until (“**for ever**”) they finished their apostolic ambassadorial work. Such involvement of the Holy Spirit with, on, and in the apostles covers far more than the miraculous operation necessary to reveal to them the New Testament, inspire them flawlessly to record it, and confirm it. Z. T. Sweeny in his book, *The Spirit And The Word*, has an excellent discussion of the meaning and significance of *paracletos* (“**Comforter**”). Sweeny uses “Paraclete,” the transliteration of the Greek word *paracletos*, in his writing on the subject. On pages 68 and 69 he wrote:

This Paraclete is a distinct gift to the twelve, to take the place of the personal presence and guidance of the leader who is preparing to leave them. What is the nature of this promised one? By examining the lexicons we find that Paraclete is:

1. One called or sent to assist another.
2. One who pleads the cause of another.
3. A monitor.
4. An instructor.
5. A guide.
6. A helper.
7. A supporter.
8. A comforter.

Of this Paraclete Jesus says:

1. Whom the world cannot receive.
2. He dwelleth with you and shall be in you.
3. He shall teach you all things.
4. He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have spoken unto you.
5. He shall testify of me.
6. He shall convict the world of sin.
7. He shall convict the world of righteousness.
8. He shall convict the world of judgment.
9. He shall guide you into all truth.
10. He shall show you things to come.
11. He shall receive of mine and show it unto you.

Here we have eleven distinct things that the Paraclete is to do for the apostles. All these offices of the Paraclete were needed by the apostles in their work of proclaiming Christianity and establishing the church.

Not one of the direct actions of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in any way, form, or fashion altered their free will. Furthermore, such action of the Spirit did not cause the apostles to think that they had any less natural responsibility to comply with all that God obligated them to do for them to receive their salvation. Also, the presence of the miraculous gifts in the infant church did not cause her members to lessen their natural efforts (willingness to obey the Lord) in discharging their own salvation obligations to God (1 Cor. 12:7-11; Acts 8:17-18; 19:6; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 5:19-26; Phi. 2:12; Col. 3; 1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:15).

THE DIRECT WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH THE APOSTLES PAUL AND PETER

Being an apostle of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul possessed the *paracletos* relationship of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:12). However, such a direct work of the Holy Spirit did not cause Paul to be any less determined to submit his own will to the will of Christ in all things (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Furthermore, this direct work of the Spirit did not weaken or hinder Paul's natural sense of obligation or determination to correct sinners (Gal. 2:11). It is obvious that Peter did not think that he could blame the Holy Spirit for his own improper exercise of his free will (Gal. 2:11-14ff). To conclude otherwise is to reveal an abysmal ignorance of the Bible's teaching concerning the work of the Holy Spirit on the apostles.

In the first century church, every permanent obligation of the gospel pertaining to being saved from sin and remaining saved (faithful to the Lord), we have today. Not one direct miraculous action of the Holy Spirit on members of the first century church lessened or weakened the responsibility of every member to work very hard to discharge their duty to God in the use of their time, opportunity, and ability (Jam. 2:14). To conclude otherwise is to deny the teaching of the infallible Word regarding the direct and immediate work of

the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles and in the lives of those to whom they imparted miraculous gifts. Furthermore, such a false view reflects on the integrity, sacrificial dedication, and godly characters of these saints of old.

THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

It should be remembered that even the miraculous gifts in the church at Corinth did not prohibit them from having carnal minds and from making a big mess out of many matters necessary (obligatory matters pertaining to being faithful to the Lord; 1 Cor. 11:20) to living the Christian life. Miraculous gifts may have been used correctly or misused and abused. At least some of the Corinthian brethren abused them. Such was in the power of those who possessed them (1 Cor. 14:32). Further proof of this point is seen in Paul's admonition to Timothy. Paul told him not to neglect his miraculous gift (1 Tim. 1:6).

FALLACIOUS REASONING

If the Holy Spirit and Paul had reasoned the way some brethren do, he would not have written the Corinthian brethren. Why write a letter to correct those who have miraculous gifts? They already have the gifts to guide them in living the Christian life. Was the presence of the miraculous gifts (supernatural aid) hindering the normal rational natures and free wills of the Corinthians from doing all they naturally could to discharge their obligations to God? The Holy Spirit and the apostle Paul whom he inspired did not think so. **"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. ...Let all things be done decently and in order"** (1 Cor. 14:37; Also see 4:21; 15:58).

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD" (2 The. 5:21)

Are we to conclude that the reason for the Corinthian's errors is found in their possession of miraculous gifts? Do we mean to say that the presence of such gifts directly influenced their free wills, altering their self-determination. There is no evidence to cause us to believe that they thought that the Holy Spirit would do for them what they must do for themselves? If the answer to the previous question is yes, the following syllogism sets out the fallacious reasoning that leads to such an erroneous conclusion.

Major Premise: When the Holy Spirit acted directly upon a church member during the first century, said member expected the Holy Spirit to exercise a direct influence over said Christian's will, changing, or altering, or inhibiting it as He desired.

Minor Premise: Paul received a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

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Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves; for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 1:20-25).

WORLDLY MEN ARE HOSTILE TO THE DIVINE IDEAL

Worldly men are exceedingly poor judges of what constitutes acceptable character traits. This is why the more negative, aggressive traits Christ and His apostles demonstrated and endorsed are especially obnoxious to most people. Worldly wisdom has so influenced great numbers of professed Christians that they refuse to preach or practice these qualities. Rejecting what the scriptures teach, they have shown how unlike Christ and hostile to the divine ideal they really are. For instance, they believe the lie that everyone, and especially their brethren in Christ, must speak only in a positive way and reject everything negative. Isn't it odd? They adamantly insist that this should characterize everyone—except themselves. They are so blinded they do not realize their own criticism of others is negative—a no-no, according to them. When they tell those who will listen to their lying words that they must not be negative, the critics are being negative.

THOSE WHO IGNORE GOD'S WORD

These unbelievers ignore the testimony of God's own book. They portray Christ as a mealy-mouthed, milquetoast coward who would never say anything to upset others. Such people are as distressed as His first-century disciples, and not a little ashamed, that Jesus would label those who misled and deceived the unsuspecting as being the **"offspring of vipers"** (Mat. 12:34) or some such term. Jesus even called Peter a very unflattering name, **"Satan."** In the same verse, He made another negative statement when He told Peter He was not minding the things of God (Mat. 16:23).

In the preceding chapter, Jesus charged the Pharisees with ignoring the will of God (Mat. 15:3-6). Then He called them hypocrites (v. 7) and said their worship was vain (v. 9). These were the leaders of Israel! It was in this context that the spiritual weakness of the disciples and Jesus' response to it are shown:

Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides (another unflattering, negative statement; AB). **And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit** (Mat. 15:12-14).

AFRAID OF OFFENDING MEN

The disciples were deeply concerned about offending such influential men. They would have avoided it had the matter

been left to them. Jesus pointed out that these Jewish leaders were teaching what God had not authorized (plants which God had not planted), and that such teaching would be uprooted—no ifs, ands, or buts! Then Jesus told them to leave these blind guides alone. If they did not, they too would find themselves in the same pit of religious error into which the false teachers had fallen.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

So much was at stake in this great battle between truth and error—the destiny of men's souls. Jesus, the champion of truth, could not remain silent and let Satan win the day. He would not allow His disciples to do it either because of some misplaced allegiance to a code of etiquette dictated by worldly wisdom. Jesus said what needed to be said when it needed to be said. Thus, He showed that some things are more important than humanly-imposed rules. Could anything demonstrate more vividly that man-made edicts—even those honored by cultured society—are to be ignored if they would frustrate God's will by keeping one from doing what needs to be done.

This does not mean a Christian can be mean-spirited, malicious, slanderous, or hateful in what he says or does. He is commanded to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), and to be gentle, forbearing, and meek toward all men (2 Tim. 2:24f; 1 Pet. 3:15). He is to consider himself as he corrects others, realizing he may also need correction in the future (Gal. 6:1f). At the same time, he is told to **"speak the things which befit the sound doctrine"** (Tit. 2:1), and to **"contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 3). Even liberals are familiar with 2 Timothy 4:2. They may despise it, but they know it is there: **"Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."**

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Modern infidels in sheep's clothing would never tell a fornicator he (she) was lost unless he repented and obeyed the Lord—especially if the sinner was a big contributor. After all, they might lose the contribution! Is that not more important than where an immortal soul might spend eternity? They would never, ever upset those who had the power to get a preacher fired or have a member ostracized. They reason (?) that such sinners must not be made to feel guilty—or that they must obey God's will if they would be saved. Judging by their speech and actions, it is not amiss to charge that such false brethren today are just as distressed as Jesus' disciples were when He told sinners (and that included all men) that they were lost. Jesus convicted men of sin and called them to repentance. He exposed false teachers, hypocrites, and religious charlatans of every stripe in no uncertain terms.

CONCLUSION

Today, do these wolves in the body of Christ believe anyone is lost and faces a devil's hell unless he is reconciled to God

(Col. 1:21,22)? Does it ever occur to these blind leaders that sinners might repent if they were confronted with the condition of their souls and what the will of God requires of them? Could it be they have no faith in the transforming power of the gospel or the ability of God to accomplish His will through His word? God said:

For as the rain cometh down and...watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (Isa. 55:10f).

Jesus' character had many sides. He was meek and humble; He was loving and patient—the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He was also courageous, unwavering, and strong—the Lion of Judah (Rev. 5:5). He never courted popularity at the expense of what men needed to hear—and they needed to hear the truth about the sin in their hearts and lives. They needed

to know that God demands faithful obedience if one is to be saved. Jesus told men what they had to believe and do in order to be forgiven of their sin and be reconciled to God. We cannot do less, and we can be sure that faithfulness to God will not make us any more popular than it did Him.

Our Master said: **“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets”** (Luke 6:26). Again, Jesus warned:

If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you (John 15: 18-20).

—Deceased

(Editorial, Continued From Page 3)

Conclusion: Therefore, Paul expected the Holy Spirit to exercise a direct influence over his will, changing it, or altering it, or inhibiting it as He desired.

The form of the syllogism is valid. However, the major premise is false. Thus, the conclusion is false. Hence, such reasoning falls flat.

The direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and those who had miraculous gifts imparted to them by the laying on of the apostles hands did not directly influence those brethren's free wills as they went about discharging their salvation obligations to God. To take any other position is to fly into the face of the material in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit Himself has revealed for our instruction on this subject.

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

As we have studied, the “Paraclete” relationship of the Holy Spirit was by Jesus promised only to His apostles. By that power the apostles had the ability to impart miraculous gifts to the infant first century church through the laying on of their hands (Acts 8:13-19; Regarding this matter, why can we not see what Simon saw? Also see Acts 19:6). When all the apostles and those to whom they imparted miraculous gifts died, all such direct work of the Holy Spirit on the saints ceased. Repeatedly in debate with those who claim such miraculous powers from the Holy Spirit today, we prove their affirmations false.

PROVIDENCE

What about God's providence? Providence simply defined is a careful supply of needed resources. In the case of divine providence on behalf of Christians, it is something beneficial for us that God does on our behalf—for us, not to

us. It in no way directly changes one's free will.

Miracles fall under the head of temporary and providential providence. Since their cessation, God's providential acts may be called general providence and in no way today involves miracles. No one knows what all Deity and all the holy angels are doing on our behalf (for us) at this moment any more than how God works in the kingdoms of men, but He is involved in both cases to accomplish what He desires (Dan. 4:17). That is God's business and not ours (Deu. 29:29). Furthermore, the specific details of how he answers prayer are not revealed to us. However, James wrote:

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias wail a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jam. 5:16-18).

He can and does answer prayer without the use of miracles. Paul said that the Corinthians had been of help to him in their prayers on his behalf (2 Cor. 1:11). Would the help of their particular prayers have been available to Paul if they had not prayed? Peter instructed husbands to treat their wives properly lest their prayers be **“hindered”** (1 Pet. 3:7). If they failed to treat the wives correctly would their prayers not be **“hindered”**? Just a few verses later Peter wrote that God's **“...ears are open unto their prayers:...”** (1 Pet. 3:12). Does God hear us when we pray according to His will? Paul said that **“...in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (Phi. 4:6; See also Eph. 6:18). If Christians did not make their **“requests”** known to God, would it make any difference in God's dealing with them? He also asked the Colossians to pray **“...that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ...”**

(4:3). Does this not imply that God hears prayers and answers prayers regarding specific requests of Christians? May we pray such prayers today and expect them to be answered without God working a miracle so to do? The apostle John answered the question when he wrote:

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him (1 John 5:14, 15).

John says that God hears and answers scriptural prayers. Do you teach what John taught and continues to teach? Indeed, as we live in harmony with His will and ask according to His will He hears and answers our prayers according to His wisdom. We are not told how God answers these prayers but answer them He does. Surely, we have not concluded that the only thing we can do is thank God for what He has already done, which action on His part was determined by His attribute of omniscience before the world was.

CONCLUSION

We waste all manner of time and get into all sorts of hurtful wrangling in attempting to explain the unrevealed and/or the unexplainable. In the long ago, the final solution to such things was given by the Holy Spirit when He inspired Solomon to write: **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man”** (Ecc. 12:13). To emphasize something that has no bearing on one’s learning and discharging of his obligations to God cannot do anything but hurt the cause of Christ as well as those who advocate it. For the sake of the whole blood-bought body of Christ and the cause of our Lord, we should concentrate on **“the conclusion of the whole matter”** rather than on something no man can fully understand and/or explain. Why not conclude what the Holy Spirit concluded and place our emphasis thereon?

—David P. Brown, Editor



PUTTING LIPSTICK ON A PIG

Roelf L. Ruffner

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:13-15- *NKJV*).

I saw an interesting advertisement on the Internet the other day which regularly appears on many news websites. It was an appealing generic picture of a pale man with long hair and a beard. It was supposed to be a picture of Jesus Christ, though no one knows what He looked like and whether He had long hair. It looks like His eyes are closed as if in prayer. Beside Him is a branch of a tree, possibly a palm tree. Below was a caption which read: “Feeling alone? Reach out to God. Pray with us. ComeuntoChrist.org.” Some ads include “Missionaries on duty.” I looked up the website and found what I expected. It was something hatched up by that old adversary of New Testament Christianity, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or the Mormons. (Their 96-year-old President, Russell M. Nelson, has commanded that they no longer use the name “Mormon” to refer to their theological cult, but in this article, I will use that name.) There are also various videos on YouTube with this name put out by them. There is even a rather syrupy, sentimental song titled “Come unto Christ,” complete with pictures of happy people

looking happy. This is all a net to catch the gullible and the uninformed. Their squeaky-clean religiosity belies an anti-truth, controlling organization teaching heresies from the pit of Hell. **“That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting”** (Eph. 4:14).

We have all seen their “missionaries”—neat, well groomed, young men and women who always travel in pairs. They knock on your door and claim that they want to study the Bible and pray with you, which is not correct. What they really want to do is to spout their false doctrines and try to entice you into their cult. Most of all they appeal to your emotions—the need for friends, sympathy, emotional support, etc. Because of the pandemic, and logistical reasons, you rarely see them on the streets anymore, at least in the United States. They seem to have decided to focus their resources on the internet, but the web of the spider is the same and the doctrines they teach can kill the soul.

THE BIBLE IS NOT ENOUGH

These cherub-faced peddlers try to sell you on the idea that the Bible is incomplete; that there is “another testament of Jesus Christ”—the *Book of Mormon*. In 1830 Joseph Smith, Jr. (“Prophet-Seer-Revelator”), a con-artist in west-

ern New York state produced a book in which he claimed an angel named Moroni had revealed to him when he was 19 (or was it 14?) years old. He maintained that he translated its golden plates from “reformed Egyptian” to English using “seer stones.” It is a rather boring tale (“chloroform in print”—Mark Twain) of two civilizations built in the New World by Jews in ancient times for which there is ZERO archeological, historical, or even genetic proof. To spruce it up and make it sound Biblical, Smith added *King James Version* words and phrases such as “thee” and “thou” and the ever present “it came to pass.” As the old joke goes, “If you believe all that, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I want to sell you.” Or as Paul warned,

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8,9).

Tragically, there are many gullible and emotionally vulnerable people in the world who will accept this lie between two pieces of sympathy.

They claim that the Bible is inspired “as far as it is accurately translated.” So, you have something else besides the Bible as your spiritual guide or the *Book of Mormon* that they demand was translated accurately by Smith. They also assert that the Bible is missing some “plain and precious truths” which the *Book of Mormon* contains but they cannot point out. Yet one of their most important doctrines “Celestial or Eternal Marriage” (the teaching that a marriage performed in one of their temples is for “time and eternity”) is not found in the *Book of Mormon*!

The truth is that the *Book of Mormon* is not the final authority for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. They rely more heavily on another contradictory “inspired” work, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, a collection of so-called revelations given by Smith and the false prophets which followed him. The church authorities did not even encourage its members to study the *Book of Mormon* until the 1980s. Yet its missionaries will press you to read it and pray to God for wisdom to accept this piece of monotonous fiction as truth, a misapplication of James 1:5. This “truth” (lie) sets no one free from sin (John 8:31-32).

GOD MAKERS

President Lorenzo Snow, fifth president of the Mormon church, once said, “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become.” This is a complicated false doctrine as most false doctrines are. Basically, it says that God was once a man but now He and Mrs. God are busy producing little souls to send to earth. These souls grow up and someday, if they have been a good Mormon and after their death, they can become a god and have their own world to populate. According to them we are all physically and spiritually children of the Heavenly Father. But God is not a man

(Num. 23:19). He is an eternal being who has no beginning or end (1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 16:5). He does not have a physical body but is Spirit (John 4:24), and He is not married (Mat. 22:30).

ANOTHER JESUS

The Jesus Christ of Mormonism is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible. In the Bible, Jesus is part of the Godhead and equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:18). In Mormonism, Jesus is the physical Son of the Heavenly Father. The *Book of Mormon* says that after His resurrection and before His ascension He preached the Gospel in the New World and many of the inhabitants were converted. Again, no historical record or archeological artifact has ever been found to verify this nonsense. Compare this with testimony of the physician/historian Luke:

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed (Luke 1:1-4).

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL

Mormonism is a religious system of meritorious work in which one attempts to earn their way to Heaven and godhood: temple duties, temple marriage, baptisms for the dead, missionary work, etc. Religious works of merit for salvation have no place in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast”** (Eph. 2:8-9).

There is much more I could write about this subject. From personal experience, I must warn you to avoid inviting their “missionaries” into your home or having a study with them unless you are well-informed on their false doctrines. All they want is to confuse you, not to study. This warning does not apply to your Mormon co-worker, friend, and neighbor. In most cases, they are honest, friendly people who are caught up in a cult and need to be freed. Many are secretly, if not openly, fed up with the controlling antics of this group. Others have read things on the internet about Mormonism and have many questions. What an opportunity! **“And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh”** (Jude 23,24).

END NOTE

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Follett_discourse as of August 13, 2021.

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JESUS CHRIST CAME TO SAVE THE LOST

Andrew M. Connally

God's purpose in sending Jesus into the world was to save sinners, **"for the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Luke 19:10). Again, **"Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"** (1 Tim. 1:15). His program in accomplishing this was urgent and full, for He said, **"We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world"** (John 9:4-5). Yet, He accomplished His Father's mission, for John declares, Jesus said, **"I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do"** (John 17:4).

In order to accomplish God's purpose, He shed His blood. Matthew records, **"For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins"** (Mat. 26:28). In doing so, Jesus died for all men, everywhere.

But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he would taste of death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in

bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:9-10).

But, in the midst of such a program Jesus said He would build Himself a church, **"And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"** (Mat. 16: 18). We pose this question: If the church has nothing to do with our salvation, what did He want with it when He came to seek and save the lost? His very blood was shed to purchase the church, for elders are exhorted to **"feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood"** (Acts 20:28). Why would He shed His blood to purchase a non essential institution when His mission was to save the lost?

What do men really think of the church? Most of them do not really think of the church at all! Those who do usually equate it with a lodge or civic club, the thought of which is blasphemy! The way many members neglect it, reject it, reflect upon it is not a bit better! Shame on them! But the idea that salvation is out of it contradicts every statement in the Bible on the subject!

—Deceased