***Mormonism, No. 2
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In our study of the book of Romans, one thing that has come out certainly has been the fact that the mentality of the old sin nature does not like to be restricted to the authority of the Bible. That is the whole problem with mankind: "I don't like to be told what to do on the authority of a God who tells me that He has written a book that I have to obey and that I have to listen to." And in the matter of salvation, you may be certain that there is nobody else who is going to have a voice in the business of going to heaven except God Himself and the pattern that He has established.

We have been using Mormonism as an example of one of those fantastic delusional situations where people are actually giving glory to Jesus Christ, but have distorted the gospel of the grace of God in salvation in such a way as to ensure that they cannot be saved. This is a very sobering fact. We approach it with some trepidation. We just hesitate to actually look at millions of church members and say that they're going to open their eyes after death in hell. They're not going to open their eyes in the presence of the joy of the Father in heaven whom they praise and honor, and His Son.

A man sat here this morning. He was a visitor. He was getting the initial groundwork of our review of what Paul has taught us concerning salvation from God's point of view, and what is required. And then when we began tying this into application to a fine, outstanding group of religious people of our day, the Mormons, he jerked like somebody had put a shock of electricity on them; leaned forward in his chair; and, never leaned back again for the rest of the service. He was shocked and hopefully learn something about a group that everybody would look upon with great esteem and respect, but whom, on the basis of Scripture we must obviously say, have a gospel that is not found in the Bible. They have a god which is not found in the Bible. They have a basis of church structure which is not found in the Bible.

Mormonism is a system of great financial prosperity. Consequently, it has very impressive facilities. It has temples for the performing of its sacred and secret rites. It is building six brand new ones now. These are imposing structures, and they have upon them the stamp of a group which is affluent, and which is confident, and which is exalting in its sense of being called to God by a special ministry. Its tithing system brings in almost $2 million a day to the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City. Satan created a monster here that's destroying the souls of the people, but he is prospering it very, very well.

By this reference to Mormonism, I hope to alert you to the primary issues of salvation and biblical authority. If you're going to deal with these people, you have to know that their problem is with the doctrine of salvation, and their problem is with the basis of authority – a false Scripture. This is not to ignore the fact that there's a great deal of misrepresentation about Mormonism. The primary reason that they were a persecuted people, for example, was not because of their religious beliefs. Mid-America of the 19th century couldn't care less whether you worshiped Baal or Muhammad or anything else. If you come had in there, and been a group of pioneers with skills that they needed in the West, they would have welcomed these people, and they certainly had that.

The problem was that the Mormons viewed themselves as called of God, and as the saints of God to move the gentiles out of the way. And their principal was: buy them out if you can; or, drive them out by force if necessary. It was what the Mormons were doing and their financial wheeling dealings. After all, this was done to gentiles, so it didn't matter.

When the Mormons began their trek out to Utah, eight of the 12 apostles upon which their church is built, including Brigham Young, were under indictment by the government for fraud. Parley Pratt, who was one of the original associates of Joseph Smith, was assassinated, and he was the basis of the vengeance by an Army group that Joseph Smith had called the "Danites." And he was the reason that Brigham Young ordered the massacre of 123 emigrants passing through southern Utah on the way to the West Coast to avenge the blood of Parley Pratt. Do you know what happened to Parley Pratt? He got shot by a farmer as he was seeking to escape on his horse with the farmer's wife that he had seduced, and carrying her away to make her his 12th wife. Now that's understandable why the farmer was upset, and it's understandable why he resorted to such strong action. But the Mormons don't tell you that.

Now we could go on and on. As I say, that's kind of beside the point. After all is said and done, it doesn't matter how good or how bad the individual Mormon is. The question is, was there a revelation from God supplementary to Scripture or not? And is it a true revelation or not? That's the issue. Christian doctrine is not affected by the fact that we are weak, or that we are sinful, or that we fail of the truth that we should know and we should live up to.

**Mormonism**

Here, very briefly, is the situation with Mormonism.

**The Preexistence of Souls**

It begins with the doctrine of the preexistence of souls. This doctrine says that all of you were conceived by a heavenly father and a mother in a sexual experience in heaven that gave birth to you as a preexistent soul. You were given a body at a certain point in time, and you came onto this earth, and you were born into a family. The reason for that is to give you a period of probation where you, by your human efforts and by your human good works, should prove yourself worthy of returning to heaven to spend eternity in a place that the Mormons call exaltation with the Heavenly Father.

**The Mormon Plan of Salvation**

Mormons are taught to go to heaven by four distinct steps. In a pamphlet put out by the church at Salt Lake City, called "The Plan of Salvation," the steps are as follows.

1. **Faith**

First is faith: "To enable man to perform any work whatever requires that he have faith in the ultimate result of his work. No farmer would plant unless he expected to reap; no builder build unless he expected to inhabit; no speculator invest unless he expected to increase his means; no journey would be attempted unless there existed the hope of reaching the destination. So, likewise, no commandment of God would be obeyed unless there existed faith that certain blessings would follow obedience. With this idea plainly before us, we can comprehend the assertion of the apostle Paul to the Hebrews: 'But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.'

"And again, we read, 'And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.' Or in other words, they had no faith in the claim He made of being the Messiah. Consequently, they were deprived of the blessings that fell to those who had faith, as mankind today are depriving themselves of many great and glorious blessings through their unbelief in the divine calling of Joseph Smith, the prophet and seer."

First of all, we have the idea of faith. This is faith in the new everlasting gospel, as Joseph Smith described it, as it was revealed to him. There is actually a very minor emphasis in Mormonism upon faith in Jesus Christ the Savior.

Satan can well afford to urge faith in Jesus Christ within the Mormon system. Some of you asked me after the service this morning: "If they trust in Christ as Savior, are they not saved at that point?" Well, it is not simply that they recognize that Jesus Christ is Savior, which they do; and, that He has provided a basis of atonement for their sins, which they do. The issue is *how* they accept Jesus Christ, and the basis upon which they accept that provision. And Mormons accept it on the basis of the provision of Christ and their works: their ritual water baptism; and, their ritual of the laying on of hands. And their advancement in the spiritual life is determined by the performance of the rituals in the ceremonies in the temple.

**Masonry**

Joseph Smith was greatly influenced by the Masonic Lodge, and caught a great deal of vision for esoteric rituals and ceremonies which are performed in the temples. And he picked this up directly out of the Masonic Lodge.

**Baptism by Proxy**

Mormons believe in being baptized for other people by proxy for the dead. For example, there are Mormons who have been baptized for the thief on the cross, because he could not experience water baptism, and he cannot go to heaven until he has that water baptism. This was a doctrine which was introduced by a fellow named Sidney Rigdon. Joseph Smith was surrounded by a group of about five different men, all of whom, in one way or another, were involved in putting together the Book of Mormon and this whole system. Sidney Rigdon was the only one that had any ministerial training. He had been an associate previously with the Baptists, and quite an evangelist leader.

Then he broke off from them and joined a fellow named Alexander Campbell, who was starting a new church, which today we know of as the Church of Christ. At the core and the heart of Sidney Rigdon's thinking was water baptism as being essential to salvation, which Alexander Campbell picked up and made the foundational stone of the Church of Christ denomination today. But finally, even Alexander Campbell could no longer stomach Sydney Rigdon, because he had some really weird ideas on religion. He was an experimenter in religion.

Well, when he met Joseph Smith, this was exactly what he wanted. And he brought all the things over from Campbellism and the Church of Christ viewpoint right into Mormonism, at the heart of which was this business of water baptism.

Well, these people have put together a system which calls for a faith not in Jesus Christ as such, but a faith in the orders of the church itself, and the ceremonies which they present (their workspaces) – all these services they perform for the dead in the temple. All of these are part of gaining God's approval and proving them in their period of probation.

Now Satan has no problem encouraging people to have faith in Jesus Christ, provided that that person does not stop there, and provided that he has faith in Jesus Christ on the basis of his water baptism, or on the basis of his taking of the mass. This is just as in the Roman Catholic Church, that's a sacrament that helps you to salvation. That is what you must understand. It is not simply accepting Him as Savior. It is accepting Him as Savior without you adding anything to it.

That's what Paul has been driving home in the book of Romans, and that's why these people are going to be lost, because they have undermined the grace basis of salvation. But they do speak of faith (as I say) as just a kind of a general idea that everything's going to work out well.

**The Charismatic Movement**

Incidentally, they have a connection to the charismatic movement, because Mormons believe that all these miracles of the ancient church are to accompany the evidence that a person has faith. So, they believe in the speaking of tongues; the healing; and, the whole bit.

1. **Repentance**

The second step in Mormon salvation is repentance: "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Let the wicked forsake his way. Repent every one of you. Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish. We understand that repentance does not consistent of mourning over sins committed, and then repeating the same sin, or one equally heinous, but that ... people cease from doing wrong; quit their evil practices; and, walk in the path of rectitude, virtue, and true holiness. For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world works death. We believe that the sorrow of the world here alluded to is the too-prevalent practice of crying, groaning, and moaning over our wrongdoings, and then continuing the same practices."

By this second step of repentance, here they mean to stop sinning – not just feeling sorry for your sins. They fail to grasp, of course, that the word "repent" in the New Testament means "to change your mind." And the only way a person can change his mind about his sin is to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, and to trust in Him. So, in the Word of God (in the New Testament) the word "repent" and "believe" are really equated, in effect, to one another.

So, this act of repentance means to clean up your life. Well, this is pretty tough for a lot of people. This eliminates a lot of people right off the bat. There are some people who just couldn't clean up their life no matter what depended on it. There are some derelicts and degenerates who simply cannot clean up their lives. This, interestingly enough, is why Mormonism, by and large, has not gone beyond middle class, white, well-heeled Americans. It doesn't go to the down-and-outers on Skid Row. It doesn't have a message to them that can have the transforming power that the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ does.

So, repentance (cleaning up your life) is again a human effort to add to what Jesus Christ has done.

1. **Baptism**

The third step in Mormon salvation is to be baptized: "'He that believes (that is, he that has faith) and is baptized shall be saved' was the emphatic assertion of our Savior. Again, we find that man came under condemnation by refusing obedience to this commandment. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of Him. So, the world of today will, in the end, find themselves under condemnation for refusing to obey this principle of the gospel."

They make no bones about this. They claim that one cannot be saved without water baptism. For this reason, there is a fantastic genealogical library which has been established in Salt Lake City. You wouldn't believe the building; the rooms; and, the equipment, and the shelves upon shelves upon shelves. They're gathering information from all the countries of the world, by every kind of record imaginable, in order that they can try to compile the names of every human being that ever lived to every extent that they can. Some of the Mormons spend (as their good works contributing to this works salvation plan) being baptized by proxy in the names of these people. They get these people here, and here they are. Usually, they start with their own family. They work out their family tree, and then they are baptized. One of them said he'd been baptized 5,000 times in proxy for one person after another. After you've had the water baptism, if you don't want to accept it, you don't have to.

What this is, is a system of doing things for the dead, in the pattern of the Roman Catholic Church, like you wouldn't believe. I think one of the reasons he brought Mormonism into being in the 19th century was in order to create a papal authority system that Protestants would accept, and not be offended by it. But it's got the whole pattern. If you don't live up to the standards of the Mormon code of ethics, and if you do not turn in your tithes regularly, they'll jerk your card, and that will close you off from all communion and contact with the temple program, which is essential to your self-improvement works program. If you do not subscribe to the moral code, they will pull that card. They have an authority to excommunicate like the Roman Catholic Church does. There is a priesthood which has the authority to convey the blessings of God upon you or to withhold them. There is an authority system that is exactly Satan's reproduction of what he produced in Roman Catholicism.

At the heart of it are these sacred rituals, which only the church, through its appointed descendants of authority from Joseph Smith, can perform. Water baptism is one of them.

1. **The Laying on of Hands**

The final step in Mormon salvation is the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost: "This is a principle to a great extent ignored by the Christian world, yet plainly taught in the Scriptures. Sufficient has doubtless been said clearly to establish the fact that the gift of the Holy Ghost was formerly obtained by the laying on of hands of those who held the authority to do so. Nowhere do we find that the order here laid down has been supplanted or annulled. On the contrary, the apostle spoke in the strongest terms against any innovation upon the established forms that Jesus taught them. Paul, writing to the Galatians, speaks of those who were perverting the gospel – doubtless teaching such things as that the laying on hands was not necessary, or else that it was done away with, and says, "But though we are an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Anybody who follows the four steps of the Mormon salvation plan, which as you can see, even though it is surrounded by Scriptures that seemingly condone these human doing work activities, will inevitably end up in the lake of fire, because any works neutralize the possible ground of salvation by grace.

The fourth requirement for salvation in the Mormon system, we indicated, was laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit. They, of course, ignore the fact that, in the book of Acts, there was a gradual change the baptism in the Holy Spirit being given by the imposition of hands. As each new group came in, this was done in order to identify that: now Samaritans were in; and, now gentiles were in. And gradually you get to the point where you have the situation in the household of Cornelius, where the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes automatically without the imposition of the laying on of hands. That became the norm, and that's the way it is today. So, God the Holy Spirit baptizes a believer into the body of Christ apart from the authority of any human hands.

Now, of course, among Mormonism, the only hands that can impose that right upon you again are authorized priests who have been appointed through the proper channels of the church itself.

So, this plan of salvation is a works system, and it is followed by a works system (it is climaxed by a works system). It is a huge system of self-improvement.

One of our men that I was speaking to before the service this evening had some dealings with Mormons out West. Eventually, the question always comes up: when do you know that you have enough standing with God (enough self-improvement) that you will escape the lake of fire? And they say, "Well, we really don't know." This is the same lack of assurance you have in a Roman Catholic who never knows when he has enough works. The works system is always a system lacking an assurance.

Of course, it is obvious that under such a system, one cannot think that he ever has salvation in perpetuity if he ever does secure it. It's a system of human rituals and human good deeds. And the book of Romans, we have shown you, has very clearly condemned that.

So, four million Mormons are trusting in this non-New Testament plan of salvation. And four million Mormons are lost. And that's my whole point of discussing Mormonism, because it is a commendable group of people in so many ways that it is sobering to think that these people, in all this sincerity and all this approach to God, are on the road to the lake of fire.

What a fantastic satanic deception! What an exaltation of Jesus Christ by . . . the devil. You would never expect him to have done it. And yet he does.

However, there is a matter of future punishment. When you get to speaking about this, Mormons are very hazy. I could not draw out of any of them specifically what the opposite was of what they call "exaltation" (arriving in heaven). I asked one man, "Would that be hell?" He said, "Well, yes, but that's only temporary. So, what they are speaking about, again, is a destiny that has many loopholes and many outs. They view it actually as being very unfair of God to not give a person another chance after death to be able to receive the revelation given to Joseph Smith. These people will look at you, and they will very sincerely declare to you that there are millions of people who have lived, and it would be most unfair of God not to have given them a chance to have heard this new everlasting gospel, and to accept it.

In the plan of salvation, they put it in this way: "Knowing these facts (that is, these facts that I have just outlined – these four steps of salvation), the life of every good and true man, as was Paul, would be rendered miserable at the thought that so many millions of the human family must be irretrievably perish and be subject to torture throughout all the eternities to come. But understanding the great principle of the mission of our Savior to the prison world, they can rejoice in the fact that the plan of salvation is a complete one. (That is the prison of the dead). They have hope that, not only in this life, but in the life to come, the gospel would be preached, and men may be taught its precepts. God, being no respecter persons, it would be manifestly unjust for one portion of the human family to have the privilege of hearing the sound of the gospel in this life, while so great a proportion never heard it, and lie under condemnation for the fact. No, the plan of salvation is complete, and reaching from our preexisting state, applies to our present condition, and will extend to the future state until every son and daughter of father Adam has had ample opportunity to embrace its tenets and live in accordance with its spirit.

"Paul beautifully and aptly expressed the principle in writing to the Corinthians. If, in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we of all men, are most miserable. But knowing that the gospel would be preached to the spirits in prison, and that untold millions of those who fail to accept the gospel here, would do so there, he felt to rejoice in his heart instead of being the most miserable of men."

Now here's an example of taking a Scripture and just twisting it all out of what it says. Paul is talking only about the fact of resurrection. And Paul is saying that if all we have to hope for is this life, and no resurrection, then we are a miserable lot. Whereas, they take it and say that if all we have hope for, salvation is in this life, then we are a most miserable life.

**Universalism**

Well, they base this concept upon the fact that Jesus Christ went (after His resurrection) and spoke to the souls in paradise, announcing and proclaiming the conquering of Satan and the provision of eternal life, and taking them up on high into glory. What this really borders on in Mormonism is universalism. They are quite vocal about the fact that everybody, in effect, is going to be saved. And they quote, "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess" as proof that everybody is going to be saved. They call that "the grand and glorious salvation of the Creator, from eternity to eternity." So, they actually have universalism, which is another satanic concept.

**Baptism for the Dead**

So, the doctrine of being baptized for the dead takes on a very important feature for them, because if everybody is to be saved, then they must do it by their pattern – that the Book of Mormon and the revelations of God through their prophets have told them is the pattern of salvation (the new everlasting gospel). And they must have water baptism. So, they are baptized in behalf of these people who are dead.

**Genealogical Records**

Incidentally, in the mountains right outside Salt Lake City (which happen to be granite mountains), they have built huge storage vaults in which they have duplicate copies of everything that's in the downtown building on genealogical records. And probably every one of you in this room is on record in that building in Salt Lake City, and your name is hidden in that vault, which is atom-bomb proof. They are that fanatical about preserving the names of those who have lived, so that they may engage in ministries of good to aid them in salvation.

**Eternal Punishment**

Now, what do they mean by eternal punishment? Well, they can't quite deny that. That's certainly in the Scripture, but they have a very interesting little twist on what eternal punishment means. Let me read it to you right out of their book on the plan of salvation: "In conclusion, let us examine one more question that has doubtless presented itself to the mind of the reader. And that is the question of future punishment. If, by preaching to the spirits in prison, bringing them to a knowledge of the truth, and being baptized for them, releases them from their prison house, it logically follows that there must be an end to future punishment.

"We hear the question asked, 'Do not the Scriptures say that it is eternal punishment and everlasting punishment?' We answer, 'Yes." But let us not put any private interpretation on these terms, but correctly understand their meaning. Eternal punishment is God's punishment. Everlasting punishment is God's punishment. Or, in other words, it is the name of the punishment God inflicts – He being eternal in His nature. So, because God is eternal, any punishment He inflicts becomes eternal punishment. Whosoever, therefore, receives God's punishment receives eternal punishment, whether it is endured one hour; one day; one week; one year; or, an age: "And they were judged every man according to their works. Some shall be beaten with hew, and some with many stripes.' Here we have plainly set forth the fact that men are not punished alike, and that some receive a greater punishment than others."

So, eternal punishment for them simply means that its punishment which God gives, but it does not mean that it goes on forever.

In 1820, when Joseph Smith was supposedly kneeling in that grove of trees near his home in upper New York state, asking God to show him which was the real and true church, because he said that, at that time, there was a great revival going on among the churches, and much confusion. And he was wondering which was the true one for him to join.

Incidentally, research that has been made on the spiritual and the religious situation in that part of New York among these particular churches that he was associated with, in the town in which he lived, their records revealed that in 1820, there was no revival. There were no evangelistic meetings. The revival and evangelistic meetings that they had came about three years later in 1823. I just mentioned that in passing. There are many inaccuracies of dating, of one kind or another, relative to the reporting even of what Joseph Smith says happened to himself.

**Golden Plates**

On September 21st, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared, and he revealed that there was a book in a stone box, along with the Old Testament high priest Urim and Thummim and the breastplate, which would enable him to take these golden plates and to translate them into the Book of Mormon. Mormon was a prophet who gathered these writings. He had a son who happened to be an angel. Mormon was a human being. He had a son who ended up being an angel. You have this confusion in Mormonism. The angel Moroni is on the top of the temple, blowing the trumpet in Salt Lake City. And Moroni took these gold plates and he hid them in a hill in Palmyra, New York, on a hill called Cumorah, on which there stands a monument now commemorating this. And in this stone box, Joseph Smith reportedly found these plates.

His mother describes how everybody was trying to get these plates. She wrote a little memoir about her son, and about his translating the plates. And she said on one occasion, as he was carrying the plates home, a group of ruffians were trying to get these golden plates from him, because they were so valuable. And Joseph grabbed the plates, and he ran for two miles; knocked two of them over; and, finally breathlessly arrived at home. Well, unfortunately, according to the description of the size of the plates that we have by Joseph Smith, when we total up how much that would weigh (as gold plates), it would weigh 240 pounds. Now 240 pounds, running for two miles, with people chasing you, and knocking them out of the way – that is in good physical shape.

Now that bothered Brigham Young so much that he squelched the story. He ordered it just continued to be written, and he gathered up all the copies that had been published, and he destroyed them. And he probably told the mother not to write anything more. This is the origin, supposedly, of the Book of Mormon. The translation by Joseph Smith through the Urim and Thummim.

There has been considerable research (and some very recent) that has demonstrated that there was a basis for the stories that are in the book of Mormon. As a matter of fact, it was an old old heresy – an old old notion about what happened to the ten northern tribes of Israel that went into captivity under a Syria. They came across the ocean, and became the American Indians. In the day of Joseph Smith, there was a recent publication trying again to establish that theory. So, that was not a whole unusual idea. And, of course, that's what the Book of Mormon is all about – how the Jews left Jerusalem in 600 B.C. under the threat of the Babylonian captivity. And they rushed out, and they built a boat under God's command, just like Noah did. And they came across the ocean, and they ended up here in the new world, and they became the American Indians.

**Claims of the Book of Mormon**

Now, there's a little bit of a problem, because American Indians don't look much like Jews. There's all kinds of geographical problems. Man, you wouldn't believe it. The descriptions that Joseph Smith came up with as to Jerusalem and the country of Palestine; the surrounding territories; and, rivers flowing where there are no rivers in that part of the world. It's been reported that the scholars at Brigham Young University are so frustrated in trying to establish the geographical and anthropological claims of the Book of Mormon, that in their frustrations, they have now begun to recommend that the Book of Mormon should just be read in a spiritual sense, and taken as a book of spiritual meaning, and not to be literal.

When my number two son was on the digs in Egypt with the Johns Hopkins University, one of the associates (a young man who was on the team who was an Egyptologist) was a representative of Brigham Young University. And he was sent by the Mormons. He was on that mission for the specific purpose of trying to establish authenticity for what the Book of Mormon claims.

Well, increasingly, the book is so shot-through with errors of one kind or another that are self-evident, that it has becoming embarrassingly difficult for them to try to justify the original writing of which there have been thousands of changes since.

What I'm getting at is that here was Joseph Smith claiming to have received these golden plates with this special revelation, and to have received, by God's imposition, authority within the church that nobody else on earth had. For example, on April 7th, 1829, John the Baptist appeared and ordained Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (his scribe) to the Aaronic priesthood, so that they had the right to administer sacred rights. In September, 1830, Cowdery declared that he'd had a revelation from God to the effect that Smith was the sole channel of divine revelation. And from henceforth, only he could speak for God.

Now you had the living prophet concept. Now you had a church structure with a sense of apostolic authority and descent – the same thing that Satan created in the Roman Catholic Church.

**Salvation**

Well, I don't want to get bogged down. There's so much that I'd like to brief you on. But I want to stick with the issue of salvation. So, now, with all this direct authority from God; with all this revelation from God; that all the religious creeds were wrong; that all the denominations wrong; and, that, for 1,700 years, the gospel had been lost, in spite of the fact that we had the Greek and Hebrew testaments – meaning that the gospel was not really in them to begin with, and that we could not read and find that gospel, but now it was going to be restored. What kind of a gospel indeed did we find?

One of the things we want to remind you of is that revelation, while it is progressive, is never contradictory of previous revelation. The basis of what you know from your Romans study, how does this match up to you. This is what Joseph Smith himself had to pronounce concerning this gospel now revealed to him – he who had been invested with this special authority that no man on earth now possessed.

He says, "If thou will do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shall be saved in the Kingdom of God, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God. For there is no greater gift than the gift of salvation. And if you keep My commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life; which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God. And as many as repent and are baptized in My name (which is Jesus Christ), and endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

Notice this "endure to the end, endure to the end" – this hanging in there with your works: "That as many as would believe and be baptized in this holy name, and enduring faith to the end, should be saved. Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for remission of your sins. Yea, be baptized even in water, and then comes the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost. Behold, verily, verily I say unto you, this is My gospel. Remember that they shall have faith in Me or they can nowise be saved. And upon this rock, I will build My church. Upon this rock you are built. And if you continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you."

This is actually a quotation from the writings of the Doctrines and Covenants, which contains the revelations of Joseph Smith. Perhaps you haven't been in enough charismatic meetings where they get up and they give prophecies. But that is the identical way the charismatics get up and they give prophecies today. They give a little jumbled variation of something that sounds like it's out of the Bible. And they put together little Scripture phrases, and they're giving these prophecies from God. And all these poor people are sitting around with their mouths open, and their eyes bugging. Here we're getting a direct voice prophecy from God: "Would you listen to that?" I've seen them poke each other in joy over receiving a prophecy from God.

And it was some kind of nonsense like, "Oh hear ye, ye people, ye sinners and hard-necked and stiff-necked. If you would be obedient to Me, I would bless you. Do you think that if I would not bless the people of old that I would bless you" Oh Yay, yay, yay, nay, nay, nay." And they'd carry on, and you'd get something so jumbled that you'd know that this guy was just playing around with words of Scripture. Obviously, that's what happened in the writing in the Book of Mormon. It sounds just exactly like what you would do if you wanted to write a fake Bible. Well, when Joseph Smith gives his prophecies, it has exactly that same flavor, which is an indication that indeed this is man speaking, and not from God.

One of the things about the Book of Mormon that's interesting is that some of these writings were written 600 years B.C. The Book of Nephi is one of them. It was written in 600 B.C. The thing that is fantastic is how often these books (the last one which was written within that time span of 1,000 years – from 600 B.C. to 400 A.D., before the time of Christ, and before the New Testament Scriptures were written) keep quoting New Testament Scriptures. And you reading in the Book of Mormon, and all of a sudden you have to say, "Hey, wait a minute. This was written before Christ, and here's a New Testament Scripture.

For example, in the book of Nephi in the Book of Mormon, we have this statement: "For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." Obviously, somebody read Ephesians 2:8-9, and it says, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." And immediate, they sense, "Whoo-hoo-hoo. That's not what Joseph Smith revealed to us. That doesn't fit these four patterns."

**The *Inspired* Version of the Bible**

So, we have a new revelation, and they insert it into the book of Nephi. This was obviously somebody who knew Ephesians 2:8:9, supposedly writing in 600 B.C., and he makes a little variation: "For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." When Joseph Smith was faced with this problem – that his system of revelation (which he may indeed have been receiving from Satan in all likelihood) in his Book of Mormon was in conflict with the Bible, he and his cronies finally sat down, and they wrote what was called the inspired version of the Bible, which wonderfully happened to come out in King James Elizabethan English. And the inspired version of the Bible is a correction of what the Mormons called the distortions of translation upon translation upon translation.

I don't know how many of them I had look me right in the eye and say, "Well the Bible has been so distorted by so many translations, that Joseph Smith had to correct it with the inspired version."

What they do is, for example, Joseph Smith said, "I saw God." The Bible says, "No man has ever seen God. No man can see God and live." Moses wanted to see God. He was told why he could not see God. The Father was never seen in the Old Testament. The only visible person, even in the Old Testament, was the pre-incarnate Christ as the angel of Jehovah, so He came in the form of a man or an angelic being. But no one ever saw God, meaning God in His essence; in His person; and, God in His unadorned glory. You could not look upon Him and live. Yet, Joseph Smith, in his first vision, says that he saw God. Remember that that's what all this is based on – what happened in those woods when he saw this light open, and he saw these two personages, and one pointed to the other and said, "Joseph, this is My Beloved Son. Hear Him," meaning that Joseph saw God the Father. Never before had the Father appeared, but He had to Joseph Smith.

When they discovered so many Scriptures that said, "No man has seen God at any time," that Scripture was changed to, "No man has seen God at any time except they who believe in Him. And throughout the inspired version, you had these little phrases inserted in order to condone and justify Mormon doctrine.

The gospel that Mormonism presents is not remotely the gospel of the grace of God. It is the gospel of good works; religious ritual; loyalty to Joseph Smith and his successors; and, very little reference indeed to the Lord Jesus Christ. I just want to read you what Joseph Smith's successor (the second president and prophet of the church), Brigham Young, said on one occasion. Brigham Young said, "I want to tell them, and tell all the great men of the earth that the Latter-day Saints are to be their redeemer. Believe in God; believe in Jesus; and, believe in Joseph his prophet, and in Brigham, his successor. And I add: if you believe in your hearts, and confess with your mouth: that Jesus is the Christ; that Joseph was a prophet; and, that Brigham is his successor, you will be saved in the Kingdom of God."

We cannot accuse Brigham Young of being modest. I mean, he included himself in big time company. You can tell he's not modest because when you walk into Temple Square, right downtown Salt Lake City, there it is – Brigham Young up there on the statue, as big as life. They have Joseph Smith, but he's tucked away inside someplace.

However, if you reject Joseph Smith, and you do not recognize Brigham Young, and all the successors of the church, you're not going to heaven. He also said: "No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith. Every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith Jr. as a passport to their entrance into the mansions where God and Christ are. I cannot go there without his consent. He reigns there supreme – a being in his spirit, capacity, and calling as God doesn't heaven."

When Brigham Young died, the last syllable words on his lips were, "Joseph, Joseph, Joseph." These Mormons are fantastically marvelous people. They are commendable and honorable and respectable in every way. But their souls are doomed by a salvation of works, and a system of revelation. And remember that what I just read to you is not the *opinion* of Brigham Young. This is Brigham Young, the prophet, speaking for God to his people. That's what he has said. This is just as Joseph Fielding Smith, who was the tenth president and prophet of the Mormon Church who, when he speaks, he speaks as a revealer from God. He says, "No salvation without accepting Joseph Smith." If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth, then this knowledge is of the most vital importance to the entire world. No man can reject that testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

If God is to maintain His Holiness, your fine service, devotion, and actions cannot substitute for the plan of salvation revealed in Scripture, that Paul is spelling out to us so clearly in the book of Romans. It is by God and by God alone. We have a problem we inherited from Adam. We have a solution that is imputed to us by Jesus Christ for those who believe and accept it. There is no other way.

I want to just stress two things again. One: Mormon salvation is incompatible with New Testament salvation. Two: Mormon authority, which is the book of Mormon, and the revelations of its prophets, the presidents of the church, are incompatible with what has been previously revealed in Scripture. These two things alone condemn this system as not being of God, but being of human origin, and being an instrument of Satan.

If what Paul says is true, the opposite side of the coin is that anything else than that is totally unacceptable with God, and totally condemns a person to the lake of fire: "Nothing in my hands I bring. Only to your cross I cling." The Mormons say: "All of my good works I bring. Only to my self-efforts I cling." Which do you think God is going to accept on the basis of what you read in the Scripture; in the Bible; and, in the Old and New Testament, which has been demonstrated to be inerrant throughout the ages in every respect? Which do you think God is going to accept? Which are you going to believe?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)