

An Appeal to Mormons

For over thirty years I have had the opportunity of talking with very many Mormons, both men and women. I have read with interest and care their publications, both for non-members and for members only as I had a friend who was once an enthusiastic Mormon but who, on ceasing to be so, gave me many books and much information not generally available to the public.

My admiration for their sincerity and single-minded devotion to live by their Mormon teaching and to convert others has never diminished. My only regret has been their unwillingness - or their inability - to face facts about the foundation of their Church.

My appeals to them to resolve two major problems which undermine the claims of their Church have gone unheeded. They have either been unable to recognise the problems or, having done so and promised to return with their leaders' answers, have failed to come back.

The first problem concerns the fundamental statement that when Joseph Smith's revelations began he saw two persons, one of whom is alleged to have been God, the Father and the other, the Lord Jesus Christ. His Son. From this develops the whole Mormon claim of authority.

Now our whole faith in God must rest on the wisdom, the constancy and unchangeableness of His principles. He cannot say one thing to one prophet and contradict it to another.

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament we are clearly informed that man cannot see God. Two quotations which state this are Exodus 33:20 and John 1:18. The first was said to the prophet Moses and was followed by a *manifestation* of God in glory. Moses was not allowed to see Yahweh, the God of Israel. The second is said as an introduction to Jesus who came to reveal the glory of God.

Did God, then, change His principle and allow Joseph Smith to enjoy what had been withheld from Moses? Moses had been chosen, prepared and sent by God and had already liberated Israel under God's hand - yet he was forbidden the privilege of seeing God. Joseph Smith was a distraught teenager, troubled by the religious arguments of his elders, unlearned in the ways of God. Did God break His long established and maintained principle for him? When men and women of faith in the Bible record saw even only an *angel*, they feared for their lives. How much more would they have been unable to see God and survive? Hence the clear and wise provision of God that man could NOT see Him.

The usual, immediate, Mormon answer is to quote Exodus 24:9-18 and Acts 7:53 But this is counter effective since if the Mormon explanation is correct then it involves making God contradict His own principles. Let God *be true* is important in every interpretation of both Scripture and experience.

In the former quotation "God" refers to a high ranking angel bearing God's Name, representing Him to Israel. There is a similar example in Exodus 3:1-4 where an angel (v.2) speaks to the prophet Moses *in God's Name* (v.6). Exodus 23:20-22 is a further situation of the same kind as is also Isaiah 63:9. This is a common feature of God's manifestation to men who are not permitted, nor are able, to see Him.

But this cannot explain Joseph Smith's alleged experience, for no "angel" could ever proclaim the Lord Jesus as his son. This is only the prerogative of God, the Father, who has said no man can see Him.

The only acceptable explanation which does not make God contradict Himself is that Joseph Smith was mistaken. He did not see God and in claiming that he had done so he showed he had no authority as a prophet of God.

In the case of the second quotation (Acts 7:53) we should note that it does NOT say Stephen saw God. It says he saw the *glory of God* and this is explained by scripture in Exodus 24:17 and many other places in a way which does not make God contradict Himself as Joseph Smith's claim to have seen God would do.

No confidence can be placed in any prophet who contradicts what God has previously revealed.

The second problem arises from comparing Mormon teaching in the Book of Mormon and other books of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints with what God has revealed in the Bible.

For example: Mormons teach that when Adam and Eve rebelled against God and sinned in disobeying His command in Eden that they should NOT eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil it was A GOOD THING. The Scriptures of Truth never countenance sin as a good thing. When the Apostle Paul asked "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:11) the answer was a dogmatic and horrified "GOD FORBID". Again we notice how Mormon teaching contradicts what God has revealed.

Another example: In the Bible God establishes marriage between one man and one woman and this principle is reiterated by the Lord Jesus and again by the Apostle Paul.

Examples of plural marriages clearly indicate that whilst they were "allowed" by God a heavy price had to be paid in domestic unhappiness and upheaval. In fact Israel's kings were expressly forbidden to "multiply wives" (Deuteronomy 17: 17) . It is interesting to read in the Book of Mormon a reflection of this command: "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none..." (Jacob 2:24-28).

Yet a revelation was alleged to have been received by Joseph Smith in 1831 and publicly proclaimed in 1852 referring to "celestial marriage" or "marriage for eternity" which contradicted a "revelation" recorded in the Book of Mormon in Jacob 2:24-28. This new revelation was to be involved in a new and everlasting covenant and rejection would bring exclusion from glory. When the American Congress prohibited polygamy after 1852 the then Mormon President Wilford Woodruff in 1890 declared his intention to submit and to use his influence with the Mormon Church to do likewise. Polygamists were then excommunicated.

Again we have to ask why God's revelation to Joseph Smith contradicted a previous one in Jacob 2:24-28 (to say nothing of what He had revealed in the Scriptures) and why a later President of the Mormon Church thought it right to break the new covenant under pressure from a Gentile government.

But apart from that tangle, we ought to notice that the Lord Jesus refuted the carnal idea of "celestial marriage" or "marriage for eternity" by his statement that "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage: but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (the future Kingdom of God on earth) and the resurrection from the dead NEITHER MARRY NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE. (Luke 20:34,35)

A third example: Mormon teaching is that all men have previously existed as spirit beings; are eventually born on earth as humans of flesh and blood; and then return to their spirit existence after the death of their human bodies. God has revealed in the Bible that man's time of

opportunity to learn the right way of life is entirely restricted to this present life. There is no reference in the Bible to a previous existence as spirits. Death ends man's time of opportunity in unconsciousness. Resurrection FROM the dead will be followed by the Judgement by the Lord Jesus from whence the righteous will go into glorious immortality in the Kingdom of God in a beautified earth and the unrighteous will return to an ignominious oblivion in death. Mormon teaching is the old eastern superstition that death is not a reality and that the "souls" or "spirits" of men come and go in various existences.

A final example: Mormon teaching has re established the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood though the Bible says this was ended by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Law of God through the prophet Moses established sacrifices and the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood to prepare the people for the coming of the Lamb of God who would save his people from their sins, whereas the sacrifices of the Law of Moses could NOT save them. The Lamb of God would also be the God-appointed High Priest and would replace the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood which could only fail because those priests often sinned themselves whereas the Lord Jesus, though tempted in all points like all men, never sinned.

When the Lord Jesus had lived, died and been raised to life again the old sacrifices and priesthood were superseded by what they had only foreshadowed. Why then do Mormons claim that God re-established by revelation to them what He had removed by revelation in the New Testament?

I have made the appeal constantly to the clean, polite, and sincere, earnest young men who have visited my home that they should consider and deal with these two major, fundamental, problems:

1. Joseph Smith said he saw God; God Himself declared that no man could do so. God's prophets do not make God contradict Himself.
2. Joseph Smith's later alleged revelation (together with others of the Mormon Church) contradict God's revelation of Truth in the Bible on many matters. I have given four examples but there are very many more.

I appeal again to every thinking Mormon, or to anyone who is considering the attractions of membership of the Mormon Church:

THINK AGAIN ... First read and study God's revelation of Truth in the Bible - it came first so read it first. Then contrast the alleged revelations in the Book of Mormon and the teaching of the Mormon Church which repeatedly contradict God's inspired prophets who wrote the Bible.

Whom will you believe?

God or Joseph Smith?

You cannot believe both!

To help you store up in your mind the principles of truth and wisdom enshrined in **God's** book - the Bible, you are invited to write for a FREE copy of a **DAILY BIBLE READING PLANNER** with its 66 page booklet of helpful notes on each day's readings. Your eternal salvation depends on your acceptance of the authority of **God's** book - the Bible. It will enlighten your mind; it will direct your thinking, God's thoughts will become your thoughts; God's ways will, become your ways.

The Bible will establish your faith in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who came to save those who hear, learn, believe and obey what God has revealed.

I appeal to you - be on your guard against all claims made by any that they have had revelations from God. Only your knowledge of what God has revealed will enable you to test their claims.

Leslie Johnson