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THE GREAT APOSTASY:
THE FALSE MORMON PREDICATE
MORMON ECCLESIOLOGY (PART 1)

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TRUTH TO MORMONS MINISTRY

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INTRODUCTION

A Mormon Missionary preparation guide instructs missionaries that:

Investigators must understand that a universal apostasy occurred following the death of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. If there had been no apostasy, there would have been no need of a Restoration.¹

Mormonism lays its claim to legitimacy based upon the faulty assumption that soon after the death of the Twelve Apostles, the true church of Christ slipped into a total and universal apostasy, leaving no true representatives of Christ on the earth for some 1700 years. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (a.k.a. the Mormon Church) lays claim to having independently restored the true church of Christ upon the earth through the work of its founder, Joseph Smith Jr. An official journal of the Mormon church sums up the situation,

Jesus . . . established his kingdom on the earth . . . the kingdoms of this world made ware against the kingdom of God, established eighteen centuries ago, and they prevailed against it, and the kingdom ceased to exist.²

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie wrote in his book,

The great apostasy which is of importance and concern to men in this day is the one which took place when men departed from the pure Christianity which was restored in the meridian of time.³

To soften the blow, Mormon missionaries assure their potential converts that every church since that time has *some* truth, but only Mormonism has restored all gospel truth and the rightful authority to act on behalf of God on the Earth today. Concerning a general church apostasy, one Mormon Missionary Study Guide says:

Only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can we find all the truths that will help us return to our Father in Heaven. Only in the true Church of Christ can we find the authority to perform the necessary gospel ordinances.⁴

Mormon leadership does not recognize pastors of other Christian denominations are true representative of God, nor does it recognize ordinances done by such pastors, such as baptism by immersion.

1 *Preach My Gospel, A Guide to Missionary Service*, by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004, Lesson 1: The Restoration, p. 36

2 *Journal of Discourses*, 13:125

3 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 43

4 Mormon Missionary Study Guide No. 3, *The Restoration*, p. 5

To the student of Mormonism, it becomes obvious that Mormonism is doctrinally so far removed from genuine Christianity that the only way such a new church movement could thrive is to invent a need. Consider how one Mormon authority put it:

Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁵

When I was a Mormon, I believed the Doctrine and Covenants, section 1:30, which says that the Mormon Church is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth." Mormon leadership, then and now, speak of the apostasy as settled fact. Church members hear of the apostate church over and over from the earliest age. Many, including myself, never investigate any further beyond what their leadership tells them. What I was to later discover, however, was that my reasoning was circumstantial, filled with assumptions, and not supported by either the Bible or even several points of LDS scripture.

The Mormon Church has made an increased effort in recent years to be viewed as a mainstream Christian church. While many Mormons today will appear gracious in their attitude toward others in the "apostate" Christian world, it is important to know what many of the early founding leaders of Mormon had to say about other churches. For anyone who has witnessed to Mormons, this point is relevant to this study because Mormons will often claim persecution by any Christian who insists that Mormonism is not Christian.

The next time a Mormon says "We're Christian too" and seems to accept you as a Christian as well, consider some of the scathing remarks made by their early Church leadership. First Mormon President and Prophet, Joseph Smith Jr., huffed concerning all the other churches who call themselves Christian:

Compare this principle once with Christendom at the present day, and where are they, with all their boasted religion, piety and sacredness while at the same time they are crying out against prophets, apostles, angels, revelations, prophesying and visions, etc. Why they are just ripening for the damnation of hell....I say, such will be damned, with all their professed godliness.⁶

Smith offered his gracious assessment of Christianity again when we asked:

What is it that inspires professors of Christianity generally with a hope of salvation? It is that smooth, sophisticated influence of the devil.⁷

5 Seventy B.H. Roberts, *History of the Church*, Introduction, 1:XLII

6 Joseph Smith Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, pp. 298-299

7 Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 218

Second Mormon President and Prophet, Brigham Young, is on record stating that "*Christianity was hatched in hell.*"⁸ He also said:

The Christian world, I discovered, was like the captain and crew of a vessel on the ocean without a compass, and tossed to and fro withersoever the wind listed to blow them. When the light came to me, I saw that all the so-called Christian world was grovelling [sic] in darkness.⁹

Third Mormon President and Prophet, John Taylor, explained who the Christian world really works for:

Christianity...is a perfect pack of nonsense...it is corrupt as hell; and the Devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work than the Christianity of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Mormon Apostle, Orson Pratt, leveled rebuke when he spoke concerning all the Christian churches of the day:

All other churches are entirely destitute of all authority from God; and any person who receives Baptism or the Lord's supper from their hands will highly offend God; for he looks upon them as the most corrupt of all people. Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the "Whore of Babylon" whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth with their fornications and wickedness. And any person who shall be so wicked as to receive a holy ordinance of the gospel from the ministers of any of these apostate churches will be sent down to hell with them, unless they repent of the unholy and impious act.¹¹

Respected Mormon Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie, was more muted in his rebuff:

In the sectarian world, the clergy is the whole body of so-called ordained ministers; those ordained to the ministry (as they suppose) are called clergymen. The ministry involved differs so radically from the Lord's true ministry that the terms clergy and clergymen are not ordinarily applied by the true Church to its own ministers.¹²

It is because men deny the Holy Ghost who giveth utterance, and preach instead their own ideas of what the scriptures mean, that there are so many false and vain and foolish notions in so-called Christendom, making the Lord's house so-called a house of confusion rather than of order.¹³

Sixth Mormon President and Prophet, Joseph F. Smith, taught:

8 Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:55

9 Ibid., 5:73

10 John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:167

11 Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 255

12 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 147

13 Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p. 324

If we make ourselves acquainted with the tenets of the religious world we shall find that they have not the gospel nor its ordinances...they are devoid of the knowledge which we possess.¹⁴

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints...is the only one today existing in the world that can and does legitimately bear the name of Jesus Christ and his divine authority.¹⁵

Additionally, as Mormons who have been active in temple ceremonies will know, secret pre-1990 temple ceremonies portrayed all protestant preachers as hirelings of Satan. The dialogue between "Lucifer" and the "Preacher" portrays the devil as offering the Christian minister a sum of money if he will preach the "orthodox religion." The script served no other purpose other than to portray Christian ministers as double-agents working for the Devil. After pressure mounted to remove the attack on preachers of other denominations, the wording was quietly removed in 1990. Of course any Bible passages demonstrating that Christian ministers can be provided a living wage are overlooked by LDS (Matthew 10:9-10; Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9:5-14; Philippians 4:15-18; 1 Timothy 5:18).

Christians should know that while modern-day Mormon leadership has significantly toned down their besmirching rhetoric of other Christian denominations, the official Mormon position remains unchanged and past statements by early Mormon leaders have never been retracted. Indeed, similar indictments can still be found in each of the official LDS books of scripture. The *Pearl of Great Price* quotes Joseph Smith, asking the Lord which church he should join:

14 Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 79

15 Ibid., p. 137

Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith—History 1:19

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt...

The *Book of Mormon* levels serious charges against other Christian churches:

Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 14:10

Behold, there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.

The *Doctrine and Covenants* also supports the claims of wickedness in apostate Christendom:

Doctrine and Covenants 18:20

Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil.

THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Mormonism's charges against a universal apostasy of Christianity is unfounded. The assured perpetuity of Christ's Church is seen in a variety of ways.

1. A Universal Apostasy is Denied in the Preservation Promises of the Biblical Christ

In order to believe in a universal church apostasy, Mormons must accept the premise that Jesus made a promise He could not keep:

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

If the charge made by Mormonism is to be accepted, then despite the assurances of Christ Himself, Hell did indeed prevail for some 1700 years—spanning from the second century to the reinstatement of the true Mormon Church in 1820.

This issue basically comes down to who you are going to believe, Joseph Smith or the Son of God. Jesus gave no caveats or conditions with His promise. Either Christ meant what He said and kept His promise, or He was a liar without the sovereignty to protect His church. There is no doctrinally sound compromise.

The "rock" Jesus was talking about was Himself, not Peter, not the Pope, and not a Mormon prophet. Throughout the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the rock.¹⁶ In several other passages Jesus is referred to as the "stone" or "cornerstone."¹⁷

It is inconceivable that the Church and the gospel of Christ—purchased with the precious blood of the Son of God—would be allowed to slip into non-existence. It is equally inconceivable that Jesus would build His church and place the safety and preservation of it upon the abilities of sinful, fallen man. Satan—the god of this world—could defeat a church built upon such credentials.

Not only did Jesus guarantee the survival of His Church, but both He and the Apostle Paul affirmed that Christ and the church would be present always, through every age:

Matthew, Chapter 28:19-20

Go ye there, and teach all nations...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Ephesians 3:21

Unto him [Jesus] be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The Christian is assured that the presence of the local Church of Christ could never have been lost from the earth because Christ assured His followers that He would never leave his followers. This has been accomplished through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, Who will "*abide with you for ever*" (John 14:16). Since the Holy Ghost only indwells believers, and believers make up the local church, the church has been safe in every age. Such cannot be said for the Mormon Holy Ghost, Who can only be received by laying on of hands by the Mormon Priesthood—a priesthood that Mormonism says was taken from the earth soon after the death of the original Twelve Apostles.

¹⁶ Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30; 2 Sam. 23:3; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:6-8

¹⁷ Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7

2. A Universal Apostasy is Denied in the Scripture of Mormonism

Ironically, consider two examples from Mormon scripture that work against the idea of a universal church apostasy:

A. John of the Twelve Apostles is immortal.

Mormonism teaches that the Apostle John has been living on the Earth ever since the earthly ministry of Christ. The title of the following Mormon scripture says that "John the Beloved shall live until the Lord comes...". We then read in Mormon scripture:

Doctrine and Covenants, Section 7:1-3

And the Lord said unto me: John, my beloved, what desirest thou? For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you. And I said unto him: Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee. And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people.

One would think that a prophet and preacher with 21 centuries of life experience and earthly ministry would have caught the eye of a major news outlet by now.

B. Three Mormon Apostles are immortal.

The Book of Mormon teaches that after the ascension of Christ, He went to the Americas and commissioned twelve Nephites to be apostles to the Americas. The title of the following Mormon scripture says that "Nine of the Twelve desire and are promised an inheritance in Christ's kingdom when they die—The Three Nephites desire and are given power over death so as to remain on the earth until Jesus comes again—They are translated and see things not lawful to utter, and they are now ministering among men." The Book of Mormon then says:

Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi, Chapter 28:4-8

And when he [Christ] had spoken unto them, he turned himself unto the three, and said unto them: What will ye that I should do unto you, when I am gone unto the Father? And they sorrowed in their hearts, for they durst not speak unto him the thing which they desired. And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me. Therefore, more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death; but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven. And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but

when I shall come in my glory ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality; and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.

One wonders how these three men are able to live and never die if they don't become immortal until after the second coming of Christ (vs. 8). Christ hasn't come yet. Shouldn't these three be dead then? At any rate, this makes a total of four Mormon Apostles alive and kicking today, prophesying among the nations today. To my knowledge, these men have ministered undetected to the media, despite hearing that "...great and marvelous works shall be wrought by them, before the great and coming day...." (vs. 31).

So why are four immortal Mormon Apostles so relevant to the Mormon universal church apostasy truth claim? Consider what three Mormon Prophets have said concerning church survival and the Mormon priesthood. The sixth Mormon President and Prophet, Joseph F. Smith, said:

Then again, if it were necessary, though I do not expect the necessity will ever arise, and there was no man left on earth holding the Melchizedek [sic] Priesthood, except an elder—that elder, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God and by the direction of the Almighty, could proceed, and should proceed, to organize the Church of Jesus Christ in all its perfection, because he holds the Melchizedek Priesthood.¹⁸

The tenth Mormon President and Prophet, Joseph Fielding Smith, agreed when he said:

As long as one elder remains on earth today he would have the priesthood and could organize the church even though all of the apostles and first presidency, etc., were killed off.¹⁹

After Joseph Smith's murder on June 27, 1844, Mormon Apostle and future second Mormon President, Brigham Young, also assured the flock that the church would not be lost—even if only one Mormon leader remained:

You are now without a prophet present with you in the flesh to guide you; but you are not without Apostles, who hold the keys of power to seal on earth that which shall be sealed in heaven, and to preside over all the affairs of the church in all the world....

...the Twelve Apostles of this dispensation stand in their own place and always will...to minister, preside and regulate the affairs of the whole church.

How vain are the imaginations of the children of men, to presume for a moment that the slaughter of one, two or a hundred of the leaders of this church could destroy an organization, so harmoniously arranged that it will stand while one member of it is left

¹⁸ Joseph F Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 148

¹⁹ David H. Ludlow, *Latter Day Prophets Speak* p. 213

alive upon the earth. Brethren be not alarmed, for if the Twelve should be taken away still there are powers and offices in existence which will bear the kingdom of God triumphantly victorious in all the world.²⁰

Mormon reader, with the forgoing instruction from three Mormon Prophets and two books of Mormon scripture, please consider how the priesthood and the true Church of Christ would need restoration if there are to this present day, no less than four Mormon apostles roaming the earth—each holding the Melchizedek Priesthood themselves, and thus the "authority" to organize and lead the Mormon Church?

3. A Universal Apostasy is Denied in the Preservation Promises of the Mormon Christ

Just as with the biblical Jesus, the Mormon Jesus promised protection from Hell's gates to a second set of apostles on another continent. After His post-crucifixion resurrection and ascension, the Mormon Christ appeared in America in A.D. 34 to build His church among the early American inhabitants. Mormon scripture records a familiar promise He made while there:

Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 11:39

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this [the doctrine of Christ] buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

Perhaps seeing a problem with biblical and Book of Mormon support for a universal apostasy, Joseph Smith recorded even more similar promises from the Mormon Christ, but this time in conditional terms.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:5

Wherefore, if you shall build up my church, upon the foundation of my gospel and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

Doctrine and Covenants 33:13

And upon this rock I will build my church, yea, upon this rock ye are built, and if ye continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

While these first-person words of the Mormon Christ may sound like the Christ of Matthew 16:18, He has clearly not said the same thing. There is no "if" anywhere in Matthew 16:18. The promise of church preservation by the Christ of the Bible is unconditional.

²⁰ Brigham Young, August 15, 1844, *History of the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 250

4. A Universal Apostasy is Denied in the Gospel, Once Delivered to All

Jude 1:3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

The theological word "once" in this passage comes from the Greek word *hapax*, meaning "one time."²¹ There is therefore no need to restore and deliver anew, the gospel of Christ.

5. A Universal Apostasy is Denied in the Remnant of God's People

The teaching by Mormonism of a universal church apostasy not only ignores personal promises to the contrary by Christ, but it is to be ignorant of church history. A preserved remnant is seen in Noah, who lived in the face of wickedness in his day. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Surely, God's people were in danger of extinction, but the ensuing chapters show a faithful and preserving God who saved His remnant of 8 believers in an arc (Gen. 7:13), while erasing from the earth every other man, woman, and child in a world-wide flood. God's people were protected.

A preserved remnant is seen from the days of Moses, who led God's people among a nation of wickedness, living under the foot of a tyrant called Pharaoh. But God preserved a remnant of His people through killing the firstborn in the homes of every unbeliever, and through guiding His people to a promised land where the purposes of God could continue.

A preserved remnant is seen in the story of Lot, who pitched his tent toward Sodom, where "...the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Gen. 13:13). But God rescued Lot by sending angels, warning him and his family to flee before God carried out His urban renewal program by raining fire and brimstone down upon a nation of homosexuals and God haters (Gen. 19).

A preserved remnant is seen in the prophet Elijah, cowering in a cave, overwhelmed in self pity as he cried out to the Lord, "...the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my

²¹ James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Greek word no. 530, p. 14

life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). But while Elijah thought he was the last believer left and destined for extinction himself, God had another plan as He assured His man that "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings 19:18).

History records the concerns of the apostle Paul that Israel might be saved, for they had rejected the Messiah and refused to submit themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10: 1-3). Paul cited an Old Testament prophet's frustration with Israel's rejection of the gospel when he said, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (vs. 16) "...All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (vs. 21). "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life" (Rom. 11:3).

But even when the leadership of God thought that they were the last man standing, God had still prevented a total extinction of His believers. Moses saw God at work when the rejection of the gospel by God's covenant people (Israel) would only spread the gospel to the gentiles, for Moses said "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people [Gentiles], and by a foolish nation I will anger you (Rom. 10:19).

The Apostle Paul saw God's purposes unfolding in a rebellious Israel when he explained:

Romans, Chapter 11:1-2, 4-5

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew....But what saith the answer of God...I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace [Christians who have accepted the gospel].

History records the words of the Apostle Peter, who admitted that there will be many (not all) who "shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (1 Pet. 2:2). But he has also assured us that "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations [trials], and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (vs. 9)

The Apostle Paul spoke of those:

2 Timothy, Chapter 2:18-19

Who concerning the truth hath erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some [not all]. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Christians receive a "seal" through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.²² The attempted termination of God's people and the Church of Christ continues unabated even to this day, with more Christians having been martyred in the 20th century alone, than all previous centuries combined. Christians fill prisons and unmarked graves today from Cuba, to China, to Bosnia, to India, to Saudi Arabia and the entire Muslim dominated Middle East—yet the Church of Christ carries on, whether openly above ground, or quietly underground.

In the wisdom of God, the Church of Christ *is not* preserved today in the autocratic theocracy of a church president governing from church headquarters, with a local address and a 403c tax exemption status. Such organizations would be vulnerable to hostile leaders of state, and false religions who teach a *convert or die* theology. Such a church could not go underground, for you cannot follow a leader you cannot find, and you cannot lead a church living underground.

A church preserved in the leadership of one or several men at church headquarters is also a church that can become apostate through just one false prophecy, or one unbiblical policy. As the man at the top goes, so goes the whole church. The survival of God's church is too important to place in the hands of just one man.

In God's wisdom of preservation, the survival of the church is assured not through consolidation, but through diversification. The true "Church" of Christ today is preserved through the thousands of autonomous, local assemblies of believers across the world. For every mainline denominational headquarters compromising the truth today, there are a hundred local, autonomous churches still staying true to God's Word. For every church preacher today, compromising on issues of homosexual ordination, or women preachers, or abortion, or modesty and standards, or worldly music, or man-centered, self-help, gospel absent preaching—there are many more men and women in God's churches staying true to His Word.

²² Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21-22

If and when the time comes, God's people will go underground if necessary to survive. The truth is, you couldn't snuff it out God's people today if you tried.

MORMON APOSTACY PROOF TEXTS

MORMON: *"Doesn't the existence of dozens of Christian denominations prove a total apostasy?"*

While Latter-day Saints float the circumstantial charge that variation in Christian churches proves apostasy, most fail to mention the fact that their own organization suffers from the very same thing. Since the founding of the original Mormon Church in 1820, dozens of splinter groups have since formed, each charging that the former fell into error. Some splinter group examples include the "Strangites, the Cutlerites, the Temple Lot Mormons, the Church of the Lamb of God, the Church of Christ, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Children of Zion, Christ's Church of the First Born, the Church of the Messiah, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Israel and more."²³

Several—if not all—of these churches also believe that they are the sole true church on the earth. All of these church teach different things, follow different prophets, and accept different scripture. In fact, the variation between these groups is much more significant than what Mormons charge among the Christian denominations. While there is admittedly disagreement among secondary teachings within Christian denominations, the Christian body as a whole agrees on the core, essential doctrines that define the gospel of Christ and the salvation therein.

At worst, the Mormon charge may prove that some Churches are wrong, but it does nothing to prove that all churches are wrong.

MORMON PROOF TEXT — 2 THESSALONIANS 2:3

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

What I never noticed when I was a Mormon is that this verse never says there will be a complete or total falling away. Neither does this passage say that the falling away will be all churches. In fact it cannot be all churches, as Christ ensured us that it would be preserved. This passage must then be referring to the condition of people, and yes even some church

23 Bill McKeever, *Answering Mormons' Questions*, p. 26

people, but not the whole church. Yet from this one verse, Mormons abandon all present day churches as false.

MORMON PROOF TEXT — 1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

Firstly, “some” does not mean “all”—it means what it says, “some.” To make this prove a universal apostasy is to add something that simply is not there. To be certain, the Bible warns that there will be false teaching and false teachers.²⁴ This was the case from the time of Christ to today. However, none of these biblical teachings say or even intimate that there will ever be a total and complete church apostasy. Mormonism has read that meaning into the Bible without contextual support.

SUMMARY

Mormon Apostle James E. Faust proclaimed:

We believe The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a restoration of the original Church established by Jesus Christ....²⁵

But as we have demonstrated, a total apostacy could not have occurred. Moreover, if a “restoration” is to return something to its former or original state, Mormonism is demonstrably not a restored church, as significant doctrinal differences exist and none of the unique LDS scriptures or interpretations are supported by even a single biblical manuscript.

Not only do any of the Mormon priesthood offices exist in the manuscript record, but the hierarchical, top-down Church of Mormonism is nothing like the individual, autonomous, self-governing churches of the New Testament with Christ as the Head. A church structure like Mormonism can be decapitated with the apostacy or elimination of just a few men at the top. But in the wisdom of God, the thousands of geographically diversified and autonomous churches protects the church of Christ from a universal or general apostacy. Some will become apostate, but not all.

²⁴ Acts 20:29-30; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:4; Gal. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1

²⁵ Apostle James E. Faust, “The Restoration of All Things”, *Ensign*, April 2006, p. 61

Ironically, the very church persecution and death of the apostles refrain that Mormonism posits actually works *against* the need for a restored church. Lost to LDS is the fact that Christ used the very instrument of persecution to geographically scatter the church out of Jerusalem and out their comfort zones, where local assemblies would be protected from extermination. Persecution only spread the gospel far and wide, ultimately protecting all churches from apostacy. LDS reader, let the Bible speak:

Acts 8:3-4

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

The New Testament church, then and today, has a call to evangelize the world. LDS reader, Christ gave the commission and he empowered and protected His local churches for the work. Given these biblical and historical facts, the entire predicate for Mormonism's existence is without merit.

In Christ

Bill Young