

March 1, 2007

H.I.S. Ministries March Newsletter, covering February 2007

It is amazing how fast February went! Of course, it was three days shorter than last month! ☺ But it also brought good news: It is March 1, Spring is coming!

We have conversed with several new LDS people recently – I mean new to us. They are curious of what Christianity is all about and they seem to want to find out if there are real and important differences between Mormonism and Christianity, differences that could affect one's eternal life. It still surprises me how many Mormons think that Christianity believes in the same Jesus as they do, even in the light that their leaders openly proclaim that *they do not believe in the historical, traditional Jesus of Christianity.* Most of them we have talked to know that there is a difference between God the Father of Mormonism and God of Christianity. But Jesus? They think He is the same. They say that they know that the God of Mormonism is an exalted man, married and polygamist, and that Christianity believes in a God who is Spirit. If the Father God of Mormonism is not a true God, how could his son be the true Jesus? When asked about Jesus, they say, “*Of course we believe in the same Jesus, there is only one, right?*” By that they refer to biblical stories, how Jesus fed the five thousand, walked on water, healed the sick, etc. But when we ask them to tell us who He is, His Person, they say, “*He is our elder brother. We grew up into spirit-adulthood with him in the pre-existence. He was chosen there by the council of gods to come and redeem us so we all can go back and become gods and goddesses and creators just as our heavenly father and mothers.*”

When the Devil tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, he told her that they “*shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*”, if they’d disobey God. The Mormon Church goes a lot further with that with this temptation, i.e. they expand that to the godhood of men.

In the temple ceremony Mormons are taught that the Devil who tempted them, *is Lucifer, their brother.* In that ceremony Lucifer elaborates and tells Eve that *the Father received His knowledge the same way* (implying that when the father was a mortal man, he had done the same thing), and that they must do it to gain the knowledge the Father has. Eve agrees to take the fruit offered by Lucifer so “*that man may be*”, for the LDS Church teaches that they had to take the forbidden fruit in order to be able to multiply, to have children. They teach that God had given them two conflicting commands, and in order to obey the first command, *to multiply,* they had to break the second command, *not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.* Mormonism teaches that all the spirit children waiting in the pre-existence are depending on them and on their posterity to provide bodies for them so that they all can come to earth and progress and become gods and goddesses, just as their heavenly father and mothers have done before them.

LDS Gospel teachers’ manual, p. 11 says, “*All men and women are...literally the sons and daughters of Deity...Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in temporal [physical] body...the first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ (see D&C 93:21), so he is literally our elder brother... We would have resurrected body; we would have all power in heaven and on earth; we would become heavenly parents and have spirit children just as he [heavenly Father] does (see D&C 132:19-20.)*” (See Gospel Principals, 1997 ed., pp. 11-15.)

Many Mormons who have not studied much or have not been through the temple may still think that when the Devil said (Gen. 3:5) that they will become “*like God*”, he ment likeness only in their *knowledge of what is good and what is evil*, and not that they too will become real gods and goddesses some day. We know from Isaiah 14:12-14 that the Devil’s ambition was to take God’s place and “*be like the Most High.*” One thing we know is that he wanted our first parents to disobey God and be removed from God’s presence, as he will be. It is not far from that to assume that the Devil wanted to entice Adam and Eve with his own desires.

The Bible teaches that God made man in *His image and likeness*. That likeness is a spiritual likeness, having the ability to love, to think and reason, etc. Jesus said that *God is Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth*. Jesus said that *Spirit does not have flesh and bones* (John 4:24; Luke 24:39). From that alone we see that “*image and likeness of God*”, does not mean anything physical. We are also told in the Word that when Jesus became a man, He *became a likeness of man* (Phil. 2:7-8), *physical likeness* of mankind. We are also told that Jesus is “*an image of the invisible God*” (Col. 1:15), for *God is Spirit*. Jesus is the only one who came from heaven, we did not, we are from this earth. (John 8:23.) He is 100% God and 100% man.

Regardless of the clear teaching of the Bible that *God is an invisible Spirit, and not a man*, (Numb. 23:19; Hosea 11:9), that *He alone is God*, and that there are *not going to be Gods after Him* (Isaiah 43:10), the Mormon Church teaches that they indeed can become Gods and creators of worlds, and have spirit children who will in turn worship them.

The late LDS President, Joseph Fielding Smith, in his 3-volume book, *Doctrines of Salvation* writes: “**EXALTATION: TO BECOME LIKE GOD... [means] possessing the same attributes in their perfection, as the Father and Son now possess... How can the saints receive his fullness and be equal with the Lord, and not be as he is, that is, gods? ...They shall, through the glory and blessing of the Almighty, become creators.” (Vol. 2, pp. 35-36)**

Joseph Smith taught the godhood of men. He said, “**God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits in yonder heavens! I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea...you have to learn how to be Gods yourselves...the same as all Gods have done before you...” (Teachings, pp. 345-346.)**

Brigham Young said, “**God created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself... to become Gods like unto our Father in heaven. That is the truth about it, just as it is. The Lord has organized mankind for the express purpose of increasing in that intelligence and truth, which is with God, until he [a man] is capable of creating worlds on worlds, and becoming Gods...” (Journal of Discourses, vol. 3:93.)**

Mormon Doctrine, p. 321-323, says, “**That exaltation which the saints of all ages have so devoutly sought is GODHOOD itself...no one fully knows God except another exalted personage who is like him in all respects...They are gods.”**

“...both the Father and the Son, as also all exalted beings, are now or in due course will become Gods of Gods.” (In above quotes some emphasis is added.)

There is confusion among Mormons, and even among Christians, who have read what the LDS president and prophet Gordon B. Hinckley said, when he was asked by Time Magazine, does the Mormon Church teach that *God was once a man, and that men will become Gods?* Hinckley answered, “*I don’t know that we teach it. I don’t know that we emphasize it...I don’t know a lot about it, and I don’t think others know a lot about it.*” Many have a hard time believing that he simply lied! But he did! Of course he knows what the Mormon Church teaches about God. After all, Hinckley is

believed by Mormons to be God's prophet. He, if anyone, has to know what they teach about their God. By the way, the same year when this interview took place, 1997, LDS Church's Priesthood Manual had an entire chapter (#4) dedicated to the subject of God being once a man and men becoming Gods.

We must realize that if the father god of the Mormon Church is a false god, so is the son of this false god a false Jesus. The Bible warns about false prophets and apostles who come and teach "another Jesus", "another spirit" and "another gospel". (2 Cor. 11:4, 13-15; Gal. 1:8-9.) We, as Christians, have a great responsibility to explain to the lost who God of the Bible is, and is NOT, and who Jesus of the Bible is, and is NOT. *God of the Bible is Spirit, One God, three eternally equal Persons.*

God has been God from "everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. 90:2). There never was a time when He was not God. There was a time when God became a man in Jesus, but He never ceased to be God. He is "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1, 14.) He was and is 100% God and 100% man. He is the Creator of all things, including angels and Lucifer, whose pride caused his fall. He wanted to be like the Most High. (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:13-17.) Jesus said that it is equal to eternal life to know Him, and the Father, who sent Him. (John 17:3.) Using the name of Jesus, but believing that He is just our brother we grew up with, and a brother of Satan, a created being like we are, is putting our faith in a false Jesus who cannot save. The real Jesus will say, "I never knew you: depart from Me." (Matt. 7:22-23.) We must know Him intimately, not just stories about Him, and worship Him. You cannot have a real worship of the Real God without really knowing Him.

Jesus said that *unless we believe that He is God, we will die in our sins.* (John 8:23-24.) Mormons do not believe He is God who became a man – but that he is a man who became a god as we can also become. We must be honest with them, love them enough to risk even friendships for their sakes. We must not for our convenience's sake let them remain in their false security, having put their faith in false gods, false "Jesus" and false prophets and their fictional books. We realize that truth may hurt first, but it also heals and saves. 2 Thess. 2: 10-12 we read a warning about those who "perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved...that they might be damned who believed not the truth..."

One of the titles of the real Jesus is "the Truth" (John 14:6). In Matt. 22: 36-37 Jesus told His followers what is the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all your soul, and with all you mind." When the truth matters and we love the Truth, we have fallen in love with the Lord our God. We must never compromise biblical truth just to avoid an inconvenient disagreement on who God is, who Jesus is, and how to be saved.

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From our mailbox:

A Mormon wrote: "I am a Christian Latter-day Saint, and I value the Bible too, but NOT as inerrant word of God. As a Christian Fundamentalist YOU believe that the Bible is inerrant word of God and infallible authority and source of truth. Here you have some serious credibility issues to overcome in making the Bible to be everything you need or claim it to be. Christian scholars are now reaching the same conclusion about the Bible that faithful Latter-day Saints have known all along, and they are now finally speaking out... The truth is that the Bible has ERRORS – lots of them! Obviously God did not supernaturally protect the sacred canon of biblical scripture as some Christians erroneously believe. Whenever the Bible is presented as authoritative, infallible or inerrant, I scratch my head and think to myself – WAIT A MINUTE! From everything we know about the Bible and with the myriads of scientific and archeological evidence, your particular views on biblical authority, inerrancy and infallibility don't exactly add up with the facts... Just take a look at the Christian community...there is an amazing assortment of Christian ministers of every conceivable Christian belief and everyone wants to make money by selling their Christian religious ideas, including you! ...The common thread running through erring Christian community is the canonized Holy Bible and that is where the problem is. So if the Bible is guilty of doing all that, I strongly suggest that the highly prized cannon of

biblical scripture is ANYTHING BUT authoritative...Today genuine Christian scholars have sufficiently demonstrated that you have reached the wrong conclusions for your ERRONEOUS biblical beliefs and who among you can dispute the facts? Anyone attempting to believe such NONESSENCE is going to end up looking like an idiot and that's not good for your image either!.. If you really expect the Latter-day Saints to seriously consider your UNSOLICITED censorious criticism of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church, I strongly suggest that you correct all your own FALSE biblical beliefs first... I personally would much rather worship our true and living God instead of idol-worshipping a complex BOOK, full of errors...BJ"

My reply:

You are correct in that I do believe that the Bible is inerrant Word of God and infallible authority and source of truth. However, I do not worship the Bible as you say, but I do worship the Author of the Word (John 1:1, 14.)

I find it interesting that just about all so called "*Christian Latter-day Saints*" always try to "defend" Mormonism by attacking the Bible! Have you ever thought why? I have! It is because if there is no solid standard you can absolutely depend on, then anything can be added to it and/or changed, right? That is what Joseph Smith did. I know that because I was once where you still are.

When I had reached the conclusion that Mormonism was contradictive to itself, that it was not logical nor defensible, I was at a loss for awhile: Where to go from here? I thank God for His Spirit's promptings that led me to take the Bible, start studying it well to see if it can stand the test.

I was already aware that archeology had proven the Bible to be a real history; cities, kings, coins etc. it talks about are known to the world. But what about the miracles and other things, like parting of the Red Sea, healing the sick and other things that cannot be proven by physical discoveries? I reasoned that if the same writers who wrote about matters that can and have been proven, wrote about these other matters also, wouldn't it carry a great likelihood that they told the truth in these matters also? One of my greatest discoveries in this was my discovery that Jesus had authenticated the Old Testament. I could take His word for it above any and all so called "Bible scholars". Please read Luke 24:25-27, 44. This reports how He took his disciples through an Old Testament Bible study while they walked about 7 miles, from Jerusalem to Emmaus. He started from the beginning, the 5 books of Moses, and went through all the prophets' writings and Psalms declaring that they all wrote about Him. He did not say then or before that there was anything incorrect or missing from the written Word of God! Instead Jesus had commanded, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.*"(John 5:39). It was very helpful to me to learn that the Old Testament was canonized, made into one collection, about 400 years before Christ, and translated into Greek about 300 years before Christ. That translation is called the Septuagint. It was in use during the time of Jesus, and His apostles and all New Testament writers quoted from it, never questioning it. If we have faith in Jesus, and have put our trust in Him, we have no reason to question the Bible. If we question the Bible we do not have our faith and trust in Jesus either. It became that simple to me!

You, and all Mormons, need to consider what the Eighth Article of Faith of the LDS Church means, when it says, "*We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly...*" It declares the Bible to be correct excepting where they can prove otherwise, right? Translations can be tested. The KJV, used by the LDS Church, says on the front page, "*Translated out of the original tongues*", meaning from Hebrew and Greek. If any portion of the translation is found not to be correct, it can be corrected, right? All other parts are to be believed absolutely, according to the 8th Article of Faith! The burden of proof of a "faulty translation" is on the LDS readers. Actually KJV is a very reliable translation, even though there are some words that in our time do not mean the same anymore as they did in 1611, when it was translated. The New King James Translation has dealt with language issues, and many like to use it instead of the old KJV.

I can lay odds that the "scholars" you are talking about are "liberals", who do not want to believe the Bible and commit their lives to God, or cultists who twist the scriptures or add to them. Peter

warns about that “...which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all also other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16.)

You mentioned that the Christian world is divided and you blame the Bible for it. Lets look at what Joseph Smith accomplished with his “restoration of the one and only true church”. Joseph Smith had said, “If God had a church, it would not be split into fractions.” His “restored” church must not have been God’s church, for it too has, so far, split into over 220 fractions. They all have some things in common. They believe in Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, at least some parts of D&C, some other parts of Joseph Smith’s writings, and most of them also believe in polygamy (D&C 132). They all claim to be “the only true church”. They have their own prophets and apostles, etc. (We have documentation for that, if you are interested.)

I agree that there are divisions among the Christian churches, but they are in non-essentials, not in essentials, or saving doctrines. Christianity believes that salvation comes by acknowledging our sinfulness, repenting from our sins, putting our faith in the gospel, which is death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for us, as Ephesians 2:8-10 and Romans 10:9-10 say. We can trust and believe in Jesus and His Word and accept His provision for our sins. When we do, we become God’s sons and daughters. (John 1:12.) Jesus alone is *the Way, the Truth and Life*. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12.) No church saves – only Jesus, the True One, saves, if we come to Him.

In conclusion: The Bible is reliable history. The Book of Mormon is not. Not even one historical evidence has been found for the BoM. Please study these things before you attack the book the Lord Jesus authenticated, and His apostles quoted from and relied on. (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 1 Peter 1:21.) It is a soul-destroying matter to attack what God has given to us as His truth. The very titles of Jesus are the Word, and the Truth. (John 1:1, 14:6.) I would suggest that you look also Ps. 119:160; John 16:13; 17:17 as samples of how the Lord and His disciples saw the Word of God.

If you are interested in truth, please write again, and I’d be glad to share.

May the Real Lord Jesus, God of the Bible, give you directions and His help in this.

In Christ, Rauni Higley.

A former Mormon, now a Christian,wrote: “ I just read your account of the truth behind Mormonism. I was riveted! I am an ex-Mormon myself and I have never read more thorough, scientific argument before!

I have tried to witness to Mormons without the vast knowledge you have, and feel that I do not stand a chance with them. It is amazing to me that Mormons can be presented clear and verifiable fact, as you have, disputing so much, and they still choose to ignore it. Well, I did too, until about 10 years ago. Anyway, I just wanted to thank you and congratulate you for your article. ___ L K”

Thank you, LK.

It seems that the confusion about who Jesus is thickens. We have received many letters lately arguing that Mormonism believes in the same Jesus as the Bible teaches, and those who write to us about it, also claim, without any scriptural proof, that Jesus indeed is a brother of Lucifer and all men. Some even insist that when president Hinckley said that he does not believe in the same Jesus as traditional Christianity, he did not mean that, and that we have taken his words out of context. When I challenged this person to check the context from the LDS Church News, June 20, 1998, p. 7, he said that he does not need to check it out, for he just “*knows*” that we took it out of context! He also refused to believe and check out any General Conference sermons, where it has been declared that God and Jesus of the LDS Church are completely different than what the Christianity believes (Example: Ensign, May 1977, p. 26.) [Sigh.] When they refuse the truth, there is nothing more we can do, but pray that their eyes and ears will be opened before it is too late

for them.

Edward is working hard, and doing well in Uganda. We hear from him often.

We received a letter about a week ago from an LDS family there. They have listened to Edward's radio program and are ready to leave the Mormon Church. They are already looking for a Christian church in which to fellowship. Sad thing is that Edward's radio program will end in two weeks, unless we can send him funds to continue. Right now we do not have any money to send. He started his weekly, one hour call-in-radio program, last July. We praise the Lord for this miracle that we have been able to fund it for him this long. All we can do is to ask you also to pray for the Lord's help in it again. Edward's group of ex-Mormons has grown more, and we are very happy that his efforts have brought fruit which has encouraged him, and at the same time us too.

We do want to thank you for praying for Bruce. He called the other day to say that he has literally felt the prayers for him ever since last month when we asked you all to pray for him. We ask you also to continue to pray for guidance for Judy, Lisa, Andy, Jennifer, Sonia, Jay, Tracy and John. John is a very new believer, whose wife is still hanging on to Mormonism, which makes it difficult for both of them. I had a long phone conversation with him few days ago. He says that there are times when he still "flip-flops" because the pressure from family and friends is so strong. We are sure that the Lord will help him and his wife, if we just pray faithfully for them both.

Please keep our friend, Jim, in Northern Ireland, in your prayers. He has been hospitalized again for his leukemia. This is very difficult time for him and his wife, Margaret. We have talked about Jim many times before in our letters. He and his wife came to visit us in summer of 1999. We got to know them via Internet-ministry connections, and we loved those 3 weeks they were here with us. Jim has been involved in a ministry to cults in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for more than 20 years. (You may recall that Jim is the one who was interviewed by the Belfast's police investigators about Anne's death, 10/16/06, that was more than suspicious. We wrote about Anne in our November and December Newsletters.)

We are going this month to Midwestern Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO. to teach on Mormonism. We need prayer that God will help us to be clear and precise in all information we share and also that we can be instruments in the Lord's hands to motivate these pastoral students to love Mormons enough to tell them the hard truth about Mormonism and lead them to Jesus of the Bible. We are happy that Sandra Tanner will be there also. She will fly, but we will drive. We will have a TV interview in Nauvoo, Ill after that, and driving gives us an opportunity to view some important LDS sites we have not seen before.

Both Dennis and I have had health problems, and we are asking that you will pray for us. I am/was supposed to have a surgery soon after our trip, but I have pretty much decided not to go through with it and ask prayer for the Lord's healing. This is not a life-threatening situation, even though it is uncomfortable, and at times, painful. - Times like this I hardly can wait to have a new body. Rapture now would be good thing...☺

We thank you for your thoughts, prayers and help you are to us in this ministry. Without your help and prayers this would be an impossible assignment.

Most people of our age have retired from all work, both professional and ministry work. We cannot even think of retiring, ever. We take comfort and strength from faithful lives about which we can read in the Bible. I have not found retired people there! They worked till the Lord called them home. Actually, the older they got, the more work they had before them. Moses was 80 years when God called him to lead a couple of million cranky and complaining Hebrews from Egypt, across the Red Sea, while been chased by an Egyptian army, and that was just a beginning... When we look at Noah's assignment, and what every other prophet went through, we can see that we have it pretty good, regardless.

All we who love the Lord must stay faithful to His call till He comes. It is sad to see that some who were once excited about the Lord and sharing His Word, have now become lukewarm, seeking their own comfort-zones. Lets keep singing the old songs, *“We have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back”*, and, *“If none goes with me, I still will follow.”* As our pastor friend, Chip says, *“God is good, all the time.”* Indeed, He is.

We pray God’s blessings on you, our friends.

In His Service,

Rauni & Dennis Higley
2890 E. Willow Bend Dr.
Sandy, Utah 84093

Email: hismin@xmission.com

Website: www.hismin.com

Tel. 801.943-5011

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