



\* He Is Savior, Acts 4:12

February 1, 2016

## H.I.S. Ministries February 2016 Newsletter, covering January 2016

We are glad that we were able to continue our ***Understanding Mormonism*** classes, beginning 1-17-16, but we had to cancel 1/24/16 classes due to a big snowstorm, though not anything like in the Eastern States, where reports have that they had up to 3 feet of snow and everything was at a *stand-still*. Even with “only” 4-6 inches of snow, our streets with hills became slick and accidents were frequent. We were planning on going to church and then to Jeff Gullickson’s home to continue teaching, but early on we got several calls from our students asking *if we could cancel classes so that they would not miss anything*. We appreciated that. Dennis started to call to rest of them, those whose phone numbers we had, assuring that we’ll meet again next Sunday (of course weather permitting ☺).

We had already covered the topics of “***Introduction to Understanding Mormonism***”, “***Terminology Differences***”, “***Mormon Doctrine of God the Father and the Godhead***”, “***Mormon Doctrine of Jesus***”, “***Salvation – as taught in Mormonism***”, “***Joseph Smith and Mormon Scriptures***”, and on 1/17/16, “***Levitical (Aaronic) and Melchizedek Priesthoods***”. In our next class we will continue with another very important topic: “**14 Fundamentals in Following the Prophet**”.

[Note: **All members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles** officially, during the General Conference Sessions, sustained as “**prophets, seers and revelators**”, but only the “**Living Prophet**”, i.e. the current President, serves as ***The Prophet, Seer and Revelator*** to the whole Church. Still every one of these men is ordained to that capacity.] What do they really mean by these terms?

**From “Teachings of the Living Prophets”, we read:**

***“The living prophet is the Lord’s spokesman to the Church and to the whole world...to give inspired guidance not only to Latter-day Saints, but to all mankind everywhere... God simply does not work except through prophets... we testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day...The President of the Church... has the right to receive revelations...either new or amendatory, or give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church, the only true Church...His voice becomes the voice of God to reveal new programs, new truths... We are not dependent only on revelations of the past...we have a mouthpiece to whom God is revealing his mind and will. God will never permit him to lead us astray...you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it.*** (Quoted from ***Teachings of the Living Prophets***, pp. 10-15. Emphasis added.) [Note: They demand obedience to the “living prophet” that is blinded to all reasoning, even when it is very obvious that they have taught untruths.]

President Harold B. Lee explained the relationship between written scriptures and the words of *the living prophets* and said, *“Sometimes we get the notion that if it is written in a book, it is more true than if it is spoken in the last General Conference. Just because it is written in a book does not make it more of an authority...”*

Then, in the October 2004 General Conference, an announcement was made that said *“Thus, General Conference becomes, in a sense, a supplement to or extension of the Doctrine and Covenants.”*

Obedience to the living prophets is presented as a warning of consequences to all Mormon families. Often quoted First Presidency’s message said, *“Any Latter-day Saint who denounces or opposes, whether actively or otherwise, any plan or doctrine advocated by ‘prophets, seers, and revelators of the Church is cultivating the spirit of apostasy...Lucifer wins a great victory when he can get members of the Church to do their own thinking’...When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan – it is God’s plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy.”* [This type of reasoning allows and encourages Mormons to set aside scriptures and cease their thinking and reasoning from the scriptures what is the truth. They have no steady foundation to depend on. The only sure foundation is the Word of God, the Bible that stands forever. (Is. 40:8.)]

In our next class we will examine what are the *“14 Fundamentals in Following the Prophet”*.

These *Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet* were presented at the Brigham Young University’s Devotional Assembly on February 26, 1980, by President Ezra Taft Benson, then the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the next in line to become the Prophet of the LDS Church. It may have seemed at the time that he was preparing the membership of the Church on how to follow him when he steps into that position. During our class we will examine his entire speech in detail. Here we just present briefly for you what Benson said at the conclusion when he summarized all 14 points and added, “Our salvation depends on following these 14 Fundamentals .”

*FIRST: The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything.*

*SECOND: The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works (i.e. scriptures).*

*THIRD: The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet.*

*FOURTH: The Prophet will never lead the Church astray.*

*FIFTH: The prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time.*

*SIXTH: The prophet does not have to say "Thus Saith the Lord," to give us scripture.*

*SEVENTH: The prophet tells us what we need to know, not always what we want to know.*

*EIGHTH: The prophet is not limited by men's reasoning.*

*NINTH: The prophet can receive revelation on any matter, temporal or spiritual.*

*TENTH: The prophet may be involved in civic matters.*

*ELEVENTH: The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich.*

*TWELFTH: The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.*

*THIRTEENTH: The prophet and his counselors make up the First Presidency--the highest quorum in the Church.*

**FOURTEENTH: The prophet and the presidency--the living prophet and the First Presidency--follow them and be blessed--reject them and suffer.**

In conclusion he said, *"I testify that these fourteen fundamentals in following the living prophet are true. If we want to know how well we stand with the Lord then let us ask ourselves how well we stand with His mortal captain--how close do our lives harmonize with the words of the Lord's anointed--the living Prophet--President of the Church, and with the Quorum of the First Presidency. May God bless us all to look to the Prophet and the Presidency in the critical and crucial days ahead is my prayer."*

Ezra Taft Benson, a relatively short time after his teaching on **14 Fundamentals**, became the **13<sup>th</sup> President of the LDS Church**. He served in the LDS Church over 50 years as an apostle and later as the Prophet. He died in May 1994. **After his death** these **14 Fundamentals** were more or less *"put on the shelf"* by most Mormons, and not considered something very important, but after **Thomas S. Monson** became the President, these **Fundamentals** were, during the October 2010 General Conference, **brought back to be followed**. Two General Authorities, Claudio R. M. Costa and Kevin R. Duncan **reiterated all of President Ezra Taft Benson's 14 Fundamentals to be observed by the Church, thus assuring that Benson's counsel is still "as good as scripture"** – or even better?

President Benson, during his 50 plus years as a leader among the LDS hierarchy, was known as a fervent promoter of the Book of Mormon. He had said, *"The Book of Mormon is the keystone of [our] testimony. Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. The enemies of the Church understand this clearly. This is why they go such a great lengths to try to disprove the Book of Mormon, for if it can be discredited, the Prophet Joseph Smith goes with it. So does our claim to priesthood keys, and revelation, and the restored Church..."*

However, President Ezra Taft Benson also said, *"No book presides over this Church, and no book lies in its foundation. You cannot pile up books enough to take place of God's priesthood...there is no book big enough or good enough to preside over this Church."*

The God of the Bible warns, **"If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them...the prophet that teaches lies, he is the tail. For leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed."** (Isa. 8:20; 9:15b-16; Jer. 23:30-32.) [Perhaps when Isaiah said, *"the prophet that teaches lies, he is the tail"*, he may have referred to the tail as a scorpion's (Rev. 9:10) that is capable of causing both physical as well as mental pain when his lies are discovered.] Thus it is eternally important that we are **searching the scriptures** (Acts 17:11) and **reasoning from them** (Isa. 1:18). If we do, we will come to see that it is Jesus alone that will give eternal life if we just believe.

Jesus, in John 5:39, was speaking to the Jews, who **were searching the scriptures** and perhaps even *thinking that by them they would have eternal life* – while not seeing that the scriptures (OT) spoke about their coming Messiah, who was in front of them telling that the scriptures were all about Him, even when He said to them, **"they are they that testify of Me"**. They had the scriptures, but were not reasoning from them. We see similar blindness among LDS people. They say that they read the Bible, but they do not see that their minds are blinded to the truth of who Jesus is, and of the gospel that saves. (1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15.) Similarly, even while reading the words, they do not understand. We need to pray that their blindness be lifted and that their minds be opened to see the **glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of the Invisible God**. (See 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Col. 1:15.)

We do not know how long we have left to reach our LDS family and friends for Jesus Christ of the Bible, so we must make our witness to be the most urgent work we do.

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On 12/10/15 we had our 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Party that our daughter, Minna, had arranged, even though we at first opposed the idea of a party. She had sent invitations to about 60-70 people she knew are or had been our friends. Many of them who came were total surprises to us. Some of them are active LDS we had not seen since we left Mormonism decades ago. Even Dennis' childhood friend, Dan Stapelman and his wife Kristine, drove from Idaho. [When we were married in SL Temple, 50 years ago, Dan was *a required witness* as was Dennis' father.] Thus it was a huge surprise that Dan and his wife came. Minna had invited several other active Mormons that she knew had been our friends – and we are happy that so many of them came, some traveling long distance. It was sort of a *reunion-like* party, a mixture of Christians, Mormons and non-believers, but all of them dear friends that delighted us with their thoughtful attendance. **Minna's surprise party for us was a delightful success, and we cannot thank her enough for honoring us by organizing this party.**

We have a bit sad news to share: **Our dear friend, Bruce Balliette from Heber City, was also at our party. He was a healthy 58-year old and faithful witness to Christ. He died of a massive heart attack exactly a month after our party. His death is a reminder to us all that *our days are numbered - to God* – regardless whether we are young or old. We cannot rely even on our current health for *we all have an appointed time* (Hebr. 9:27), unknown to us, until that call comes from the Lord.** We learned that Bruce had just been *phone-texting* to another friend, Jason, who had asked Bruce to pray for his witnessing needs to his extended LDS family, and as soon as Bruce had typed his prayer ***"in the name of Jesus Christ"***, and pressed ***"send"*** key, **his heart stopped and he met with the Lord.** This was both sad and bitter sweet news to all who knew Bruce. Sad, for we will not see him again here, but **sweet news because he is in heaven, and we will see him *"there or in the air"***. (1 Thess. 4:13-18.) We pray fervently that all your and our friends will be there too – and that even those of our family and friends who do not know the Lord personally **yet** will soon consider eternity. (Acts 4:12.)

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From our mailbox: A question from an LDS woman: *"How can you say that Mormons are not Christians and that they will not go to heaven, when Mormons believe in Jesus Christ, and belong to The Church of JESUS CHRIST of Latter-day Saints and try their best to be good people, obey the 10 Commandments and live according to the laws and ordinances of the gospel?"*

**Reply:** It is not what I say that matters, but what does the Bible say about who is Christian. What I am going to say is not to critique you as a person, but **the teachings of the Church you belong to**, and where I also used to belong before I carefully studied what the biblical doctrine of God and Christ is. **The Word of God was given to us by God – *"for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..."*** (2 Tim. 3:16) The ultimate test of whether someone is Christian is **what he/she believes about God, Jesus and salvation. Doctrine of God is utmost important.** God gave us His Word so that we can know that. **If we do not know the true God and the Person, nature and work of Jesus Christ, it does not make any difference where else we might be right –we would not be Christians. We do not have to be Bible scholars to see this. The Gospel of John alone would clarify that what Mormonism teaches about God, Jesus and salvation is not Christian doctrine.** To be a Christian one needs to know and believe Christian doctrine, just as to be a Mormon one has to believe Mormon doctrine, right? Please open you Bible to John 1:1 –***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."*** [i.e. before anything was – Christ was – He Himself did not have a beginning for He is God. **He created all things, visible and invisible.** (Col. 1:16.) The Bible teaches that there is one God and that there are three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are God.] John 1:12: ***"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name."*** When we come

to believe that **Jesus is God**, and receive Him by faith, then *we become God's children*. [Before believing that Jesus is God the Son and before receiving Him, we are *children of the flesh*, NOT children of God. Rom. 9:8.] John 1:18, **"No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son... He hath declared Him"**. John 4:24 **"God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."** As you continue reading, think carefully what John is saying. In chapter 3:3 Jesus says **"except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."** He said again in verse 7, **"Ye must be born again."** [This spiritual birth is produced by the Spirit of God when we believe on Jesus Christ.] As a Mormon I believed that Jesus was my spirit brother from a pre-existence. **But John says that Jesus is God from eternity past to eternity future**. I had to relearn who Jesus really is. As you keep reading, you will learn that only Jesus, who is God, preexisted (John 8:23), we did not. We are *from this earth*, not from heaven. In 8:24, Jesus says **"if ye believe not that I AM (He) [God], ye shall die in your sins."** Only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7) and if we die *in our sins*, we will not go to heaven. Jesus clearly teaches that **He is the great I AM**. (8:58.) He emphasizes, **"I AM the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."** (John 14:6.) As you continue reading the Gospel of John, you see that *"another Jesus" or "another Gospel"* will not save. (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15.) A person who has received Jesus Christ of the Bible, **God with us** (Matt. 1:23; John 1:1, 12; 3:3, 7,) and has been born again, is from that moment on, **a child of God**. Our salvation comes by **our belief in Jesus, who is God, not by our works, but by what He has done for all who come to Him and truly believe**. (Eph. 2:8-9; John 6:28-29.) You say that you **obey 10 Commandments, and live according to the laws and ordinances of the gospel** (i.e. LDS 3<sup>rd</sup> Article of Faith). I don't know anyone but Jesus who has obeyed all 10 commandments 100%. Jesus specified their true meaning in His Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:20-48.) He did it all for us, and when we are born again, we receive of **His righteousness** (Rom. 10:1-4) and by **"His stripes we are healed"**. (Isa. 53:5.) The LDS *gospel*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Article of faith) is **"laws and ordinances of the Gospel"**. **That is another gospel (2 Cor. 11:4), not the Gospel of God, declared in 1 Cor. 15:1-4. There are no laws or ordinances in the true Gospel**. (Gal. 1:8-9; 2:16-21; 3:10-13.) I pray that this will help you to begin to see what you have not seen before. I've been there - I understand. As Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 4:3-6, we were blinded, but the glorious Gospel of Christ can set you free as it did me. I will pray for that. Let me know if you'd like to continue discussing these differences between Mormonism and Christianity.

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**Question for Dennis:** *"Don't you want to be with your family in hereafter in the celestial kingdom as you used to believe, and what your parents had taught to you? I believe that you were "born under the covenant", that is your parents temple marriage, and thus you were eligible for celestial kingdom if you live according to the laws of the gospel. I know that your wife was a convert and does not have a heritage in Mormonism, so she might not care, but what about your family and LDS heritage?"*

**Answer:** What guarantees do Mormons have, according to Mormon teachings that they will be with their family in the "celestial kingdom"? What about those family members who were not *"equally righteous"* and who did not live according to the Mormons requirements for the celestial kingdom? Actually, this LDS teachings for being *sealed, born under the covenant* and then following requirements for becoming gods, is **a totally separating doctrine. If it was true** (I don't believe it is) and I, my parents and siblings, grandparents etc. of 5 generations of Mormon ancestry before me, and if all had lived according to LDS requirements, **we could not be together**, for we all would be approaching our own *"godhood"* and busily *"organizing"* our own planets and populating them with billions of our spirit children to be sent to another earth to be born as mortals... just as (they teach) our *heavenly parents* did before us. I finally, after 40 years of faithful LDS living, figured out that this was a huge fictional utopia and not true at all. **I learned that the God of the Bible has a plan that is much better**. After I was born again (and my wife also) our salvation in heaven is sure, guaranteed and gifted to us by Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9)— nothing required of us to do for salvation, only faith in Him who loved us and paid all our sins (past, present and even future sins). We can live in freedom from fear of any

condemnation (Rom. 8:1) knowing that He paid it all. Because we trust in Jesus and His love, we want to bring others to this same freedom in His love – not to be saved by what we do, but because we love Him and want to invite others to His Kingdom. If our family members (our children and grandchildren) also believe in Jesus of the Bible, we will be forever together in the afterlife. **Heaven is a place for all who believe in Jesus to have eternal life and fellowship with God.** (John 14:6.) Think about that. "Sealed and signed" – Dennis 😊

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About 2 weeks ago we sent receipts to all who contributed to our ministry needs during 2015. If you have not received your receipt, please let us know and we can resend it. We thank you for partnering with us in this work of the Lord. Without your help we could not be sending boxes of books, DVDs and other information to LDS people who ask for them.

We just got a lovely letter from a couple in Idaho who got our package of books and DVDs etc. just before Christmas. They wrote, *"It is with heartfelt gratefulness that we write to you. Thank you for picking up the phone and taking our call. Thank you, Dennis, for going out in the weather and mailing the package... We each have read your booklet on Mormonism numerous times, and also the pamphlets by Mark Cahill and Dave Hunt's pamphlet on Trinity... My wife is on lesson 8 in the Gospel of John (by Chuck Missler)... We study the Bible together daily... We are amazed at the truth we are finding... We are grateful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for connecting us to you..."* They are planning on coming to meet us in person as soon as they can. How great is that!

We are asking prayer for improved health for Dick, Patty, Dale, Sharon, Max, Pat, Merridy, Judy, Caryl, David, Tom, Dave, Sandy, Al, Liam, Mike and Jim. We have another list of prayer requests for various trials and needed help in decision making. The Lord knows who they are and what their needs are. It's wonderful to know that He does care, and is aware of our heart's desires. He has told us that we do not need to worry, ***"...but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*** (Phil. 4:6-7.)

Serving our Lord with a thankful heart,

Rauni & Dennis Higley

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**Thoughts for the month:** *"Faith, as well intentioned as it may be, must be built on facts, not fiction – faith in fiction is a damnable false hope."* (Thomas Edison)

*"We need to take care of people's souls and salvation more than worry about them liking us."* (Chuck Swindoll)

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