



*[H.I.S.] He Is Savior, Acts 4:12

July-August 2023

HIS Ministries combined July and August 2023 Newsletter

I had to take some time off last month to give a rest for my severe dry-eye problem, and it helped. Dennis has had a very painful knee problem, but through a friend, whom he has been helping in his remodeling at Olympus Cove, introduced him to his family friend, a retired Russian Orthopedic Surgeon, who has during the last 2-3 months been helping Dennis' knee to heal. This doctor lives in Park City (where Dennis goes every Monday for his Condominium -maintenance work), so it has worked well for him for both reasons, and his knee is getting better. We have not yet been able to go camping, but maybe later, but over 100 degree temperatures have been way too hot to even plan on going where there is no AC - so staying home has been better. ☺

Rather than report about our work during June and July, we decided to answer some of the questions that we have received, asking about the meanings of some biblical terms that are not correctly understood by the members of the Mormon Church. We often get questions like that from people who know that we once were active, believing Mormons - until we learned that Mormonism is not based on biblical doctrine of God, Jesus and salvation. Since discovering all that, we have been willing and even eager to help Mormons to come to the biblical understanding of who the God of the Bible is, for He alone can save and give eternal life.

The Bible teaches, and we understand and believe that there is only One God anywhere, and that He is Triune God who is a Spirit entity. (This one God is three Spirit Persons, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit). *God the Son* became a man to save mankind. (John 3:16.) *The Son, Jesus, was born of a Virgin and begotten by the Holy Spirit.* (Matt. 1:18, 23.) He became a man, in our likeness, to pay the price of our sin by dying in our place, giving His life for us and then raising from death.(1 Cor. 15:1-4.) *"In Him dwells all the fullness of Godhead bodily."* (Col. 2:9.) *It was the Triune God* (all three Holy Persons) **that created the world, the universe and all that are in them. [This is clearly taught in the Old Testament (Gen. 1-11) and reaffirmed in the New Testament.]**

In the Old Testament, God the Holy Spirit (without naming Him) was always *with and around* believing people, giving them direction, counsel and protection, but He was **not in them** until after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascent. (John 14:17, 25-26.) Because the Holy Spirit is talked about more in the New Testament, His presence and work in it is not always understood correctly. In many places we read that *the Holy Spirit was with them* or *was upon them* or *was teaching them and filling them etc.* therefore many *ask* if these statements could mean that they already had **the Holy Spirit in them?** No, it is not possible. We have to read all teachings "*in context*" of the books and chapters where they are talked about in the Bible, the Word of God. Many scholars agree that though *all Three Persons of the Godhead* were present through it all, the OT is more about the Father, the NT is more about the Son, the Holy Spirit also was present, and He came to personally indwell believers after Jesus went back to heaven. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "*He will not speak of his own... He will glorify Me.*" (John 16:7-15.)

When Adam and Eve, our first parents, disobeyed God, they died spiritually and became mortals. We all are their posterity, "*children of the flesh that are **not children of God***". (Rom. 9:8b.) We can become God's children only by being *born of the Spirit of God. That is why*, at the very beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry as the Savior of the mankind, He said, "**You MUST be born again**". (John 3:3,7.) Thus God, through giving us His Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16), gave us the possibility to **become children of God by a New Birth.** (John 1:12-13.) **Only those who** (while still living in mortality),

choose to become God's children (by believing and receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior), **will live eternally with God in His Kingdom.**

Many find it more difficult to understand the role of **the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Triune God**, and forget that **He also is a Person, God the Spirit.**

When we are physically born into mortality, we have a human spirit and a body that God has made for us. **We became a living soul** (Gen. 2:7), **made into the likeness of God**, which means that we have a mind, ability to think and reason and freedom to make choices, but after Adam sinned, as his descendants, we don't have the Spirit of God.

When we come to genuine faith in God and Jesus Christ, we are, at that instant, born again and have become children of God. God the Spirit will come to live in us permanently, never to leave us or forsake us. (John 14:1; Hebr. 13:5.)

Like our physical birth, our Spirit-birth can happen only once! God the Holy Spirit will guide a Spirit-born person to all truth (John 16:13). **As we obey Him and study the Word of God, we grow in grace, and in knowledge, and in Spirit and in Truth.** (2 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 4:14.)

Just to summarize this, we need to remind ourselves of the biblical teachings that before Jesus' death, burial and resurrection and His ascent to heaven (Acts 1:8-9) the Holy Spirit was with believers or upon them, (John 14:17b), but He was not in believers until the Day of Pentecost and after. (Acts 2:1-4.)

Jesus had told His disciples that after He goes away, **the Father will send them another helper (the Holy Spirit) to abide with them forever and dwell in them.** (17b) **Before that, the Holy Spirit was among believers** guiding, helping and directing them, but **not in them as He is now.** That is why when David had sinned and deeply offended God, he pleaded with God, **"Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."** (Ps. 51:11b.) **Born again believers could not pray that prayer for after they have received the Spirit of God, they are children of God** (John 1:12) and **the Holy Spirit lives in them permanently**, even in times when they do not live for God as they ought to. **When we sin we grieve the Holy Spirit**, but **God has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us.** (Eph. 4:30; Hebr.13:5b .)

Through the new birth we are born of God and have become children of God. Only "children of God" will be able to see the Kingdom of God. Therefore Jesus said, "You must be born again". (John 3:3,7.)

There is a false assumption and belief even among some Christians that all humans are, from their natural birth, automatically children of God. They are not! Humans and human-race was created by God. God created cats and dogs and even rats and scorpions and all living things, but they are not His children. We as humankind can and must choose to "become children of God", "be born again" as the Bible teaches, and that takes place when we come to genuine faith in Jesus as our Savior and Lord and receive Him. (John 1:12-13.) Until then we are just **"Adam's posterity", "children of the flesh"** as Paul wrote to Romans (9:8) saying, **"these are not children of God."**

The "filling of the Holy Spirit" takes place when we study the Word of God that was given to us by inspiration of God. (2 Tim. 3:15.) **When we study, and with prayer are seeking to understand what God is saying to us, then we can be more aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and influence in our souls, and His filling of us.** That is a much different discovery than when we are just working to resolve our earthly problems of life.

There are many things that happen only once in our lives, never to be repeated. **We are physically born only once, and likewise we are born of the Spirit of God also only once.** (1 Cor. 12:13.) [Those who do not know or understand that the Holy Spirit is a real Person and **not just some airy fluid**, say that we need Spirit "refilling", because we are "leaky vessels" ☹...] **"There is only one Lord, one faith and one baptism."** (Eph. 4:4-6.) **We are baptized by the Holy Spirit when we are born again and He comes to live in us, just as was promised. By water-baptism** (Romans 6:3-7) **we testify and express to others our identity with Christ and our faith in what He did for us when He died for us. Baptism of the Holy Spirit connects all true believers into the body of Christ.** (Col. 1:18.) Paul wrote to Ephesians (4:30) that **our salvation is permanently sealed by the Spirit of God for the Day of Redemption.**

There arose questions about baptism (Acts 19:1-6) when Paul came to Ephesus and found some disciples who had been baptizing according to what *John the Baptist* had taught about *baptism of repentance* (v.4) *in preparation for the soon coming of Israel's Messiah-King, who John believed was Jesus Christ.* Paul confronted them asking *if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed.* They said to Paul that they *had not even heard whether there was a Holy Spirit* (v.2). Paul asked them, *"Into what then you were baptized?"* And they said, *"Into John's baptism."* Paul explained to them that *"John indeed baptized with baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who will come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ. When they heard about this, they were baptized in the name of the*

Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them..." (Acts 19:2-6.) These disciples of John had believed the truth that John had proclaimed, and that he also had taught that after him there will come "one who is greater than he" and that they should believe on Him, that is on Christ Jesus. But this was all they knew about what **John had proclaimed in preparation for the coming of their Messiah and King**. John did not yet know much more than that for he was a forerunner for Christ, chosen by God to be "the voice in the wilderness, preparing the way for their coming King". (Matt. 3:1-3; 11:2-19.) Therefore *Apollos and the other disciples of John*, did not know the full story of Jesus Christ, and that He was the Savior. **Therefore "John's baptism" was actually only "washing" that was part of the Jewish spiritual repentance-rituals to become worthy to receive their King**. Therefore it is a mistake for Christians to talk about John's baptism as a Christian baptism for it does not symbolize the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that is the Gospel message! **The gospel was not preached until after Jesus had died, been buried and resurrected.** (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) It was when Jesus was leaving the earth (Acts 1:8) that He said to them, **"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

When the Gospel was preached, it was to be presented "to the Jew first and then also to the gentiles". (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:16b.) Acts 8:5-17 tells that Phillip went down preaching Jesus in a city of Samaria, that was not yet an "approved area" by the church in Jerusalem, and he had great success among Samaritans. It perhaps was not expected to happen for the *Jews hated Samaritans* and avoided them as much as they could.

[It is important to have some background information why they were hated by the Jews so much that even when there was a shorter route to Galilee through Samaria, they rather took a longer route just to avoid them.] Samaritans were despised and called "half-breeds" for they were *half Jew* (from Tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh) and *half Assyrian*. After the Assyrians had conquered Samaria (in 722 B.C.), they intermarried with Jews. They were not only a mixed race by their blood-line, but their religious worship was also mixed. Samaritans believed in the *Torah (books of Moses)*, but they worshipped false gods and they had even built a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim.

Paul had taught that **the Gospel was to go to the Jew first** (Rom. 1:16b) for Israel (the Jews) was **God's Chosen nation**, even though they had rejected their Messiah and killed Him. But now, after Phillip's successful preaching in Samaria, Peter and John went there to assure that they too will be accepted into the church as equals as well as all gentiles, and to demonstrate that they did not despise them, they prayed with them and "**laid their hands**" on them, and said: "**receive the Holy Ghost**". From this the Mormon Church adopted the teaching that *the Holy Spirit can be received only by laying on of hands*. Of course that is not so. The Holy Spirit does not come through men's hands or by their command. **It is the Father who sends the Holy Spirit to those who truly believe and receive Jesus Christ and through Him become children of God**. (John 1:12-13.)

We receive the Holy Spirit when we understand and believe the gospel. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) **At Pentecost** (Acts 2:1-4) "**they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**", **without any laying on of hands**. [See also Acts 10:44-48.] This took place when Peter was witnessing to a large group of Gentiles, who were friends and relatives of Cornelius, a Centurion, **and while Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word and genuinely believed**. Then after they had believed, they were baptized. [Only true believers in the Gospel are baptized as a testimony of their faith in Christ. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is done as an announcement of a person's faith in what Christ Jesus had done to save them. **Water-baptism is comparable to OT circumcision – neither one saves. Baptism is a sign of obedience as was circumcision**. (Acts 11:15-18; 3:19; Romans 10:9-13.)

We hope that you found this information beneficial and even useful to you when you speak to others about the Holy Spirit, His Person and His work with believers during the Jesus' earthly ministry before Pentecost, the necessity of our Spirit birth, for without it no one will be able to come into the kingdom of God.

If you have further questions about what I wrote here, please send me a note and I will elaborate. God bless you all.

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We are glad that **Mormonism Research Ministry (MRM)** has been successful in finding a building for their upcoming new **Christian Bookstore and Research Center** that is so needed here. We all need to pray for Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson that they will be able get it all organized and opened very soon. We are sure that God will bless their effort. It has been discouraging, to say the least, that just about all **Christian bookstores** have closed their doors in Salt Lake City during the last few years as *non-profitable businesses*, though Utah is one the fastest growing states in the nation. One church that is happy about these **Christian bookstore-closings** has to be the LDS church. Especially after Sandra Tanner retired last February and closed her **Utah Lighthouse Ministry and Bookstore**, there must have been a huge

celebration among Mormon leadership, though much has not been publically said about that! We all miss Sandra and Jerald and their decades long work providing information, writing books, teaching and exposing falsehoods of Mormonism. Their work brought perhaps many thousands to the truth. MRM organized a lovely ***“retirement-dinner party”*** for Sandra in March. Thank you, Bill and Eric for that!

Just that you’d know why you have not heard much from me lately, it is partly because I have had problems with my old computer (Microsoft 2010). I just keep *“losing”* what I have written – they just *disappear to the thin air*, and I panic for lost time and efforts I have put on them, and then having to do it all again... I know, I know - I need to get a new computer, but I am not sure I am able to learn fast enough how to use a new computer. All computer programs have changed so much; just thinking about what that means to me, scares me. ☺ (Please pray for me.)

We want to thank you, our friends and partners in this work for all your prayers for us and your much needed help as we continue serving our Lord. We are starting our 40th year of ministry, and our desire to do this work is as strong as it ever was, and our health is even better than expected. God has been so good to us.

We ask you to pray with us for the precious people we have had a blessing to present the gospel to during these last couple of months that they would have courage to act on their new faith in Christ. Some of them have already experienced harsh opposition from their LDS friends and also from their family that are not seeing the importance of this change in their lives. We know that God will bless them as we all pray for them!

We had asked prayer for Pastor Phil Foard’s wife, Lois, who had a lot of pain even weeks after her serious back surgery, and we praise God that she is doing quite well now. We continue asking prayer for our dear friend, Judy, who still has a lot of pain in her broken ankle, and also Marlene, Bruce, Mark & Virve, Dave B., Al and Sandy, Jamie, Luke, McKenzie, Aira, Heber, Sharon, Lisa and Suzi. We rely in the promises that our Lord has given to us in 1 John 5:14-15. He does hear and answer us as we pray according to His will.

We ask that you will continue to pray with us for those who have not yet responded to the Lord’s call for them to be saved. Some of them are members of our family and some are our old Mormon friends we love dearly. It saddens our hearts that we will not see any of them after our life here is over unless they come to the Lord and are saved. *“...God our Savior desires that all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”* (1 Tim. 2:3-5.) The Lord is pleading for them that they would repent and let Him change their hearts and minds while there is still time. *“... times of ignorance God [has] overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”* (Acts 17:30.)

We hope that you will have some vacation time left and rest before the summer is over. The fall actually is our favorite time of the year to enjoy the colors that brighten the hills and cooler air to take walks that we had to miss because of the heat, over 100 degrees during the most of July. Nevertheless we love the changing seasons we experience here.

With the Love of Jesus,
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