

AN INVITATION

"take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test" (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 16:46)

"If after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments on which the imposture was detected, should be clearly and logically stated, that those who have been sincerely yet unfortunately deceived, may perceive the nature of the deception, and be reclaimed, and that those who continue to publish the delusion, may be exposed and silenced... by strong and powerful arguments -- by evidences adduced from scripture and reason..." (Orson Pratt's Works, Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, Liverpool, 1851, pp. 1-2).

"This book is entitled to the most thorough and impartial examination. Not only does the Book of Mormon merit such consideration, it claims, even demands the same.... The question of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is therefore one in which the world is concerned," (James Talmadge, A Study of the Articles of Faith, 1978, p. 273).

"The Book of Mormon can and should be tested. It invites criticism..."
(Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, Forward, p. xii).

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (The Apostle Paul, Galatians 1:8,9)

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

"Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good." (The Apostle Paul, I Thessalonians 5:21).

TO WHAT STANDARD?

So if we are exhorted to test our system of belief, what standard do we test it against? Recall again the words of Brigham Young:

"take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it, and see if it will stand the test."

This is why the Bereans are said to be 'more noble' in Acts 17:11 – they 'searched the scriptures daily' to see if the things Paul taught them were true.

Paul tells the Galatians that the standard is the gospel that he preached – nothing that contradicts his gospel should be accepted; even if it is presented by angels!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF MORMON:

"Yea, Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfected in Christ." (Moroni 10:32)

Take note the prerequisites for grace as stated in the 'if ye shall ... then is his' statement.

"...for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (II Nephi 25:23)

Have any of us done 'all we can do'? Until we do, no grace is available to us.

"... for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them." (I Nephi 3:7)

Notice the Mormon gospel is not about doing the best you can. It is about accomplishing. We are left no excuse for not keeping all the commandments perfectly.

"Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect." (III Nephi 12:48)

Perfection is the standard. Nothing less is adequate. It does not say 'become perfect'.

"And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore ye cannot be saved in your sins." (Alma 11:37)

If you have not stopped sinning, you cannot be saved.

THE GOSPEL PAUL PREACHED:

"Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

The law was given to demonstrate to us just how sinful we are – to give us a standard to demonstrate how far we fall short.

James agrees; perfection is the standard – to which we all fall short.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10)

"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

No one is excepted. We all fall short. The good news is that it is not up to us or our good works:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us..." (Titus 3:5)

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:16)

Our eternal destiny is based on what Jesus Christ has done for us:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly... But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6, 8)

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Colossians 2:13-14)

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:21)

Notice that Jesus did not wait for me to stop sinning before He would have anything to do with me. He died for me while I was a sinner because he knew I could not save myself.

"For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:14)

God does the work of perfecting us. When we place our trust in Jesus Christ alone He considers us as perfected. His work is a complete work and it is a permanent work. We do not have to work toward

our own perfection. We simply place our trust in what He has accomplished for us. It is a free gift!

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

SO WHAT MUST I DO?

My friend, we have clearly seen that the religion of the Latter-day Saint stands in stark contrast to the gospel that Paul preached. What then is to be our response?

Acknowledge that you are a sinner and cannot do anything to save yourself.

Believe that Jesus Christ as God in the flesh has paid in full the penalty for your sins. He stands in your place to receive the judgment for your sins; you stand in his place to receive the rewards for His life of perfection.

Place your trust in what Jesus Christ alone did for you to assure you a place in the presence of your Heavenly Father.

If you choose to place your full trust in what Jesus has done for you, you can be absolutely certain that you will dwell forever in the presence of your Heavenly Father.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John 6:47)

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)



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