

## "Contend Earnestly For the Faith" Part 8: Mormonism

by Erik Olsen

"...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." – Jude 3

### --INTRO:

--Mormon Church stats:

- Mormon Church founded in 1834
- Mormon Church membership: 11 million
- full-time Mormon missionaries: 60,850
- Mormon Church presence in 140 countries

### --THE ORIGIN OF MORMONISM:

--Joseph Smith at 14 years old:

--became concerned about which church to join because the churches where he lived were at odds with each other

--read James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

--while praying in the woods for wisdom about where to go to church and "battling the powers of darkness" he claims a pillar of light descended upon him in which two unidentified personages (he concluded they were God the Father and Jesus Christ) appeared; he wrote, "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong... that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight..." (Pearl of Great Price – History 1:19)

--Galatians 1:6-9: I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

--2 Corinthians 11:14: **"Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light."**

--**Satan is the "father of lies"** (John 8:44)

--**clever argument from Satan... Joseph Smith asked, "Which church?" Satan's answer: no church!**

--2 Timothy 2:15-18: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And **their message will spread like cancer**. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some."

--on the subject of Satan's deception, it's interesting to note Mormon doctrine about Adam and Eve:

--Adam and Eve could not have children in their unfallen state. Therefore, in order to obey God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) they had to first disobey his command not to eat of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17).

--Russell Ballard, an apostle of the Mormon church, wrote, "Indeed we honor and respect Adam and Eve for their wisdom and foresight; choosing to leave that behind so the entire human family could experience both the triumphs and travails of mortality must not have been easy. But we believe that they did choose mortality and in so doing made it possible for all of us to participate in Heavenly Father's great eternal plan" (Ballard, M. Russel, *Our Search For Happiness: An Invitation to Understand the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*)

--Satan's lie to Eve "you will be like God..." is the very core of Mormon doctrine! By eating of the forbidden tree Adam and Eve made it possible for themselves and all their offspring to progress towards godhood!

--Although Mormons believe Satan is the fallen "spirit-brother" of Jesus, Satan's role in Adam and Eve's breakthrough decision to eat of the forbidden fruit makes him, in a sense, a kind of saint who first preached the gospel!

--Mormon reasoning resembles that of Satan, taking what God has said and distorting it:

--Genesis 2:15-3:5: "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" ... 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

#### --"THE GREAT APOSTACY" DOCTRINE OF MORMONISM:

--all the faithful members of the early church were persecuted and killed; only the unfaithful survived  
--because only the unfaithful remained, God broke ties with the church and the true church ceased to exist.  
--one Mormon lie leads to another... false idea about original sin (Adam and Eve choice... ) --> false idea about the consequence of sin --> false idea about salvation from sin --> false idea about power/permanence of salvation  
--In essence, Mormonism cheapens all the foundational truths of Christianity and brings them down to a human level... because they elevate man to God's level.

#### --PRESERVATION OF THE CHURCH:

--According to Mormons, man earns salvation by his own strength and can therefore lose salvation by his own weakness; but according to the truth, God saves man by His divine power and makes salvation permanent by His divine power.

--salvation is a "free gift" (Eph. 2:8, Romans 5:16) and after we trust in Christ for the gift of salvation we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1:13)

--Acts 5:32-39: "...we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.' 33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: 'Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; **for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — lest you even be found to fight against God.**"

--Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for **a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**"

--2 Timothy 2:11-13: "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 13 **If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.**"

--Philippians 1:3-6: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ..."

--2 Corinthians 4:7-9: **But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.** 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..."

#### --PARTIAL FALLING AWAY:

--1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons..."

--"some" will depart – not everyone, as Mormons claim.

--Acts 20:30-31: "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."

--Ironically, Joseph Smith is an example of one who "departed from the faith" and spoke "perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves!" (1 Timothy 4:1, Acts 20:30)

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