

## Mormon Beliefs versus the Bible Part One

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As the title indicates this survey will look at Mormon beliefs. We will not be specifically concerned with the official view of Mormonism. That is because it is almost impossible to find out what the official position is. The official view of Mormonism is seemingly whatever the leaders of Mormonism at any given moment say it is. In this survey we will look at beliefs that have been held by various Mormons since its beginning. The various Mormon beliefs will then be contrasted with the teachings of Scripture. It will be left to the reader to determine if the beliefs of Mormon people official or otherwise are in harmony with the Bible.

Comments can be understood as coming from a Reformed, or a Calvinistic position. No claim is made for originality, and it is hoped that anyone interested would feel free to copy this survey if it is in any way helpful. This material is being made available to the public because of the scripture references, which should prove helpful. All passages of scripture will be from the King James Version, unless otherwise noted. It should also be noted that this is a work in progress and as such it is incomplete with numerous revisions needed.

The view of Scripture is fundamental to any attempt to establish a system of sound doctrine. What is one's view is most important.

It is important to have a theory of knowledge. The Christian must build his foundation of knowledge upon the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Many people assume that what they perceive to be truth is self-evident to all. This is not the case. Evidence is interpreted within the framework of a world-view. What constitutes a Biblically coherent approach to life? The Bible must be the bedrock or foundation for all of life and beliefs. P.T. Barnum said, "a sucker is born every minute." Many people do not grasp the potential for self-deception. Today, experience is set-forth as the ultimate test for truth. Testimonials, secular and religious are used as recruitment techniques. The Christian must not succumb to this erroneous approach to truth, namely letting experiences guide us. On the contrary, the Scriptures must always interpret experience, tradition, spiritual leaders, and churches.

The reformed faith is unique in that it places the Scripture paramount as the ultimate authority for life and truth. Many competing religious movements have attempted to undermine this teaching. When the Scriptures are the supreme authority people are less likely to follow artful deceptive religious leaders. When someone rejects the reformed position they open themselves up to all kinds of deception. They are not rejecting authority *per se*, just the Scriptures as the final court of appeal, or *Sola Scriptura*. Some have followed leaders, their own vanity, traditions, or experience are lifted up as supreme.

The real issue is one of authority. What role does the Bible have? False religious leaders attack the reliability of the Bible in order to subordinate people to their own authority. The pattern is always the same, the claim is "the Bible is not sufficient." You supposedly need their leaders, traditions, books, or special insights. The thesis that will be defended in this article is that the Bible consisting of the Old

and New Testaments is the only sufficient standard for faith and practice. The Bible is the final court of appeal when seeking for truth. The Scriptures are complete. God has sovereignly preserved His word from corruption. The believer can have confidence that he has the complete word of God to rest and base his life upon.

With that said let us begin our comparative survey of the beliefs of the Mormon people.

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### **The Mormon View Of Scripture**

What do Mormons believe about the Bible? In the Mormon work titled the *Pearl Of Great Price* we read:

We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.<sup>1</sup>

Early Mormon apostle Orson Pratt in his book *The Seer* gives us his view of the Bible:

But the Bible has been robbed of its plainness; many sacred books having been lost, others rejected by the Romish Church, and what few we have left, were copied and re-copied so many times, that it is admitted that almost every verse has been corrupted and mutilated to that degree that scarcely any two of them read alike.<sup>2</sup>

Mormon founder Joseph Smith in the work *The Teachings Of The Prophet Joseph Smith* compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, relates his views concerning the Bible:

From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.<sup>3</sup>

In this same work in a small section titled "Errors in the Bible" we find more of Joseph Smith's views about the reliability of the Bible:

Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.<sup>4</sup>

Orson Hyde in the *Journal of Discourses* has this to say about the Bible:

The words contained in this Bible are merely a history of what is gone by; it was never given to guide the servant of God in the course he should pursue. The Bible is not a sufficient guide, it is only the history of the people who lived 1800 years ago.<sup>5</sup>

Bruce R. McConkie in his work titled *Mormon Doctrine* sets forth his belief that the Bible has been perverted by men:

The great perversion of the scriptures, in which many plain and precious truths were deleted by evilly [sic] disposed persons (1 Ne. 13), took place primarily in the early centuries of the Christian Era.<sup>6</sup>

In the *Book Of Mormon* itself we find in 1 Nephi 13:28-29:

Wherefore, thou seest that after the book [Bible] hath gone forth through the hands of the great abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book of the Lamb of God.... --because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, [Bible] which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God --because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.<sup>7</sup>

It is quite clear that the extra-Biblical revelations of the Mormons serve to attack and undermine confidence in Holy Scripture. It is also quite clear that Mormon leaders do not have a high view of Scripture. They believe that the Bible has errors in it, due to intentional deletions of many important truths. The Bible is received as Scripture but with a pronounced reservation, namely "as far as it is translated correctly". A careful study of Mormonism will reveal that whenever the Bible does not agree

with other Mormon doctrines, then this is where the Bible is believed to be in error.

It is claimed that Joseph Smith's "inspired version" corrects many of the supposed errors in Bible. Since Smith did not read Hebrew or Greek or have extant manuscripts to work with during his supposed translation one can legitimately question just how Smith's bible can be called a translation at all. Smith's translation was supposedly done in a similar fashion as the *The Book Of Mormon*. This type of process is not open to investigation. One must simply take Smith at his word.

As in all sub-Christian sects one finds in Mormonism a depreciation of the Bible. This serves to create a dependence upon extra-Biblical revelation. In Mormonism this takes two forms: Other books, and the pronouncements of the Mormon leaders.

### **The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture \***

\* This section at present is being turned into a book titled *"It is written!" The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture*.

Since the Christian recognizes the authority of Scripture we will examine what God has revealed in the Bible about his word. The Bible provides a powerful testimony concerning itself. God has clearly spoken in the Bible. We can have the utmost confidence in Scripture. We will see five important truths concerning the Scriptures.

1. The testimony of Scripture concerning itself.
2. The Bible consisting of the Old and New Testaments is the word of God.
3. The word of God was to be written down.
4. The sufficiency of Scripture.
5. The closing of the canon of Scripture, the ceasing of divine revelation.

Prayerfully, this study will be edifying and a help for those who deal with individuals and religious groups who attempt to undermine the ultimate authority of the Scriptures in order to gain converts for their own cause.

#### **A. The Old Testament:**

The following passages give biblical rationale for putting in the word of God. They also establish that the Old Testament is the word of God. Because of this, there is no reason to doubt the completeness of Scripture.

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandment of the Lord your God which I command you.  
(Deut. 4:2)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.  
(Psalm 119:105)

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5-6)

Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13)

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever. (Isaiah 40:8)

These were more noble minded 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)

The above verse from Acts 17:11 deals primarily with the Old Testament Scriptures. This is because the New Testament was in the process of being given and compiled.

...the Scripture cannot be broken. (John 10:35)

Unquestionably, according to our Lord here in John the Scriptures are set forth as the final court of appeal. How does the prophecy Scripture come? Consider the Apostle Peter's words:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:20-21)

The next verse tells us what was committed to the Jewish people:

Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. (Rom. 3:2)

Jesus in this next passage from Luke is referring to the Old Testament. He did not believe any portions of Scripture had disappeared.

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27)

In the next passage Jesus tells the disciples the most important testimony of the Scriptures:

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39)

The apostle Paul gives the believer confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures in this next passage from Romans:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

In Luke's gospel we see clear indication for the Old Testament canon:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. (Luke 24:44)

This verse refers to the three sections of the Old Testament canon. The Old Testament canon consisted of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings in which the Psalms was a part. There was clearly, a distinguishable structure to the Old Testament.

In the following passage we find more confirmation for a distinguishable canon of Scripture in Christ's day:

That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation. From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. (Luke 11:50,51)

The death of Zechariah is found recorded in II Chronicles 24:20,21. At first sight this seems to present a problem because of the order of our Bibles today. It seems to exclude any Old Testament books following II Chronicles. In Christ's day the canon of the Old Testament had the book of Chronicles, which was not then divided, placed out of historical order in the Jewish canon and was found after Ezra and Nehemiah, thus making it the last book. So according to this order Zecharias was the last sufferer at the hands of the Old Testament religious apostates.

The testimony of the Scriptures stands sure. There was indeed a distinguishable Old Testament canon in Christ's day. Hopefully, those who have attempted to cast doubt on the Scriptural canon will not miss this. The Old Testament people of God knew that they possessed the word of God, and consequently, were careful in handling the text of Scripture. The New Testament people of God were no less careful.

## **B. The New Testament:**

Let us survey several passages concerning the authority of the New Testament, and the view the New Testament writers held of their own writings:

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:9-11)

These above verses teach three points that are relevant: 1- John was a prophet; 2- "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Thus, John was greater than the Old Testament prophets; 3- and the "least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." In which case, the New Testament prophets were greater than John. The Biblical, and indeed, logical conclusion is that the New Testament prophets were also inspired by God just like the Old Testament prophets. This is why the apostle Peter says:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy) II Peter 1:19

Consider Christ s explicit utterance:

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

It is clear the early Christians received the teaching of the apostles as authoritative. We see proof of this from the book of Acts:

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)

Normally, if you do not believe a doctrine is authoritative you will not continue in it. In the following verses notice how Paul viewed his own epistles and their origin. Because of the truth of apostolic authority, Paul is able to say:

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write [*grapho*] unto you are the commandments of the Lord. (I Cor. 14:37)

Paul, An apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;).... But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:1,11,12)

And the things that thou hast heard [*akouo*] of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (II Timothy 2:2)

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. (I Thess. 1:5)

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. (II Thess. 2:13)

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, [teaching, preaching] or our epistle. [written down] (II Thess. 2:15)

Consider the further testimony of Scripture. Notice in particular how Peter views Paul's writings. Peter places Paul's epistles at the same level as the rest of Scripture:

...our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles...in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; where- unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2nd Peter 1:19-21)

In the above verses, Peter connects the Old Testament Scripture with the apostolic message. The next two verses prove the gospels to be Scripture.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (I Cor. 15:3,4)

### **C. God s Word to be written down:**



For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning... (Rom. 15:4)

And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord..." And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people... (Exodus 24:4,7)

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. (Isaiah 30:8)

Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. (Jer. 36:2)

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou have good success. (Joshua 1:7,8)

And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. (Hab. 2:2)

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches... (Rev.1:11)

God's word was to be written down so that His people could know right from wrong. Apart from the objective written standard of Scripture, man is left with his own subjective opinions. There are numerous examples of the appeal to what had been previously written. A few examples being Ezr. 3:2, Matt. 4:4, I Cor. 1:19, and I Peter 1:16.

Christ and the apostles viewed the written Scripture as authoritative and cited it frequently. Consider the following passages: Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Acts 26:22; and Romans 4:3.

The next passage is of undiminished importance:

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that

was entrusted to you, guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (II Timothy 1:13,14) (NIV)

In the above verse, Paul commands Timothy to guard this apostolic "deposit" of truth. What precisely is this "good deposit," or "good thing?" This "deposit" was a distinguishable collection of writings. And furthermore, there is no indication that this "deposit" was inadequate. The apostle's teachings in Scripture are described as "traditions" II Thess. 2:15, "form of sound words" II Tim. 1:13, "the faith" in Jude verse 3, "that good thing" II Tim. 1:14, "the holy commandment" II Peter 2:21, "the apostle's doctrine" Acts 2:42, and "the faithful word" and "sound doctrine" in Titus 1:9.

During the lifetime of the apostles their "traditions" or teachings i.e., the revelation of the New Testament was conveyed in two ways: orally by their teaching and preaching and by their writings, II Thess. 2:15. In addition, there is no evidence that there was any difference between their oral teaching and preaching, and their written epistles. It should be self-evident that after the apostles died, their writings were the only means the Church had to distribute its teachings or traditions. In spite of the Roman Catholic Church's use of this particular word which has caused much confusion it should be noted that "traditions" in II Thess. 2:15 is a Biblical word that is limited to apostolic teaching and is now restricted to the Scriptures alone. There are traditions that exist outside of the Bible, some of which are good as well as bad. Extra-biblical traditions must always be evaluated in light of Scripture.

The early Christians and the Christians today have both preached orally, and have written sermons and books. There is a major difference between our preaching and writing and that of the apostles. The word of the apostles was revelatory, where as ours is simply repeating the divinely inspired word of the apostles. The apostle's words were original and authoritative. Ours is derivative and only authoritative as long as it is completely faithful to the word of the apostle's i.e., the word of God.

#### **D. The Sufficiency of Scripture:**

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (Ps 12:6,7)

For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (Ps. 119:89)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Ps. 119:105)

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure making wise the simple. (Psalms 19:7)

If the law of God were incomplete, the conversion of the soul would be tenuous at best.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

This promise of Christ to his apostles tells us that the Holy Spirit will teach them "all things", and bring to their remembrance all things that he said unto them. This is a promise by God to the apostles that important information (i.e., revelation) would be given to them. It is a justifiable Biblical conclusion that this revelation would be complete and sufficient because Jesus said "all things."

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shown you, and have taught you publicly, from house to house... For I have not shunned to declare to declare unto you all the counsel of God. (Acts 20:20,27)

Paul did not believe that God's Word was incomplete. This is proved by his use of the phrase "all the counsel of God." Paul believed that he had this counsel for the Church. This whole "counsel of God" was the same message that Moses and the prophets spoke. See Acts 26:22.

The Scripture tells us that what is written will lead us to God that we might have life. This would again be tenuous at best if many parts of Scripture have been lost or corrupted.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:31)

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever, And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter 1:25)

It is clear that Peter had confidence in God's word. He did not give any hint that portions of Scripture had been lost.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Tim. 3:16,17)

The Greek word translated "inspiration" means "God-breathed", or that God is the source of the Scriptures. They came from him. God uses men to write His Word, but He did it in such a way as to make sure that what was written was exactly what He intended.

If the Scriptures were incomplete, the "man of God" would never be able to "be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Paul's instruction here would not be true if many "plain and precious" parts were lost. These two verses clearly set forth the sufficiency of Scripture.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matt. 5:17)

Jesus said that the least part of the law would not pass away. One implication is that nothing would be lost. If the least is to be preserved, then surely, the weightier things will not be lost. Consequently, we can have confidence that God's Word is complete. There are not books missing from the Bible. The next passage from Isaiah warns us about those who will go beyond Scripture:

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20)

Now brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written.... (I Cor. 4:6 NIV)

In the *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* on First Corinthians, Leon Morris makes the following comment about the above verse:

not beyond what is written" was a catch-cry familiar to Paul and his readers, directing attention to the need for conformity to Scripture.<sup>8</sup>

The above passage in First Corinthians clearly condemns all forms of extra-Biblical revelation. There is no need to go beyond Scripture because it is complete.

The Biblical test of a prophet found in Deut. 12:32 - 13:4; Deut. 18:20-22; and Isaiah 8:20 clearly set forth Scripture as a sufficient guide. Paul in Galatians 1:8,9 continues this same pattern for testing purported revelation.

Consider the importance of the following verse:

...which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. (I Timothy 3:15) (NIV.)

The Church today like a pillar or foundation defends and supports the gospel. How does the Church do this? 1- by "Holding forth the word of life..." Phil. 2:16; 2- by "...rightly dividing the word of truth" II Timothy 2:15; 3 by "teaching all nations..." Matt. 28:19; 4- and by "guarding the good deposit" II Timothy 1:13,14 (NIV). This would be impossible if Scripture was incomplete or corrupted. Why? Because you could not know if you were "holding forth the Word of life" or the word of men. God commands us to "rightly divide the word of life." God would not command us to rightly divide something, which we did not possess. Why? If we did not possess the Scriptures it would be an

impossibility to rightly divide them. The Biblical conclusion is that Scripture has been preserved.

by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:23)

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. (II Peter 1:3)

There are a great number of spiritual blessings that God has given us. We can have confidence that "all things" would have to include Scripture as one of those things. There is not any limitation expressed here. Consequently, we have confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture.

It should also be noted that Jesus had a high view of Scripture. This is evidenced by the fact that Jesus quoted Scripture so often (Matt. 26:31; Matt. 26:54; Mark 9:12,13; John 13:18 John 17:12; John 10:35). Jesus referred to Old Testament individuals in the following verses: (Abraham John 8:56), (Noah and Lot), Luke 17:26-32, (Isaiah) Matt. 3:3, (Elijah and Elisha) in Luke 4:24-27. There is no evidence that Jesus believed the Scriptures to be anything less than complete. The tremendous spiritual corruption of Israel in Christ's day, which culminated in the destruction of the Jewish nation Matt.23: 34-36 did not affect the Old Testament canon. We can have the same confidence that corruption during the New Testament Church age has not affected the New Testament canon of Scripture in any way.

### **E. The Closing of the Canon:**

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3)

It should be noted how the *New King James Version* renders the last part of this verse:

Which was once for all delivered to the saints. (NKJ)

This verse in Jude clearly anticipates the closing of the New Testament Canon. What does Jude mean by the phrase (the faith)? Simon J. Kistemaker in the *New Testament Commentary* of the book of Jude says the following:

What is this faith Jude mentions? In view of the context, we understand the word faith to mean the body of Christian beliefs. It is the gospel the apostles proclaimed and therefore is equivalent to "the apostles teaching (Acts 2:42).<sup>9</sup>

The phrase once [*hapax*] delivered is important. *Hapax* means once for all. In *Vine's Expository*

*Dictionary of New Testament Words* we find this comment concerning *hapax*:

Once for all, of what is perpetual validity, not requiring repetition.<sup>10</sup>

The following verse is important concerning the completion of Scripture:

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. (Ephesians 2:20)

This verse in Ephesians tells us that the apostles are part of the foundation of the church. There is only one foundation that the church has. The Scripture in John 14:26 teaches that the apostles were taught "all things." Paul commanded Timothy to "guard the good deposit" of truth in II Timothy 1:14. Clearly this "deposit" was identifiable or else Paul's command to Timothy would not make sense. Since the apostles were taught all things, there would be no need for further revelation. What can you add to all things? The "good deposit" or the "all things" was tied to the apostolic period i.e., the foundation of the church. The authoritative apostolic writings became part of the New Testament canon. The Biblical conclusion is that after their death apostolic revelation ceased. Why? On account of the fact that after the death of the apostles their special office in the church ceased.

The next verse from Daniel cannot be disregarded in its importance:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)

The terminus of this prophecy is clearly in the first century. Verses 25-27 make it clear that when the seventy-week period begins, it will continue uninterrupted till the seventy week period is complete. Christ's death and resurrection made an end of the sins of His people. He accomplished reconciliation for His people. Christ's people have experienced everlasting righteousness because of the fact that we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, which is everlasting. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is clearly within the time frame of the seventy weeks, and is proved by verse twenty-six. The phrase "and to seal up the vision and prophecy" clearly sets forth the closing of the canon of Scripture.

E. J. Young in *The Geneva Daniel Commentary* makes the following observations concerning "vision" and "prophecy":

Vision was a technical name for revelation given to the OT prophets (cf. Isa, 1:1, Amos 1:1, etc.) The prophet was the one through whom this vision was revealed to the people. The two

words, vision and prophet, therefore, serve to designate the prophetic revelation of the OT period.... When Christ came, there was no further need of prophetic revelation in the OT sense.<sup>11</sup>

Since there is no fundamental difference between Old and New Testament revelation, and the source of the revelation is identical, there is no reason to doubt that all giving of new revelation ceased in the first century.

In Clarke s commentary concerning this same phrase we read:

To put an end to the necessity of any farther revelations, by completing the canon of Scriptures, and fulfilling the prophecies which related to his person, sacrifice and the glory that should follow.<sup>12</sup>

Another passage of Scripture will be cited which contains a strong warning not to tamper with God's Word.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18-19)

The book of Revelation for good reasons is believed to be the last book written. It was completed prior to 70 A.D. as is evidenced by the fact that the temple was still standing in chapter eleven. The time texts in chapter 1:3 and 22:6,12 demand a short period of time for the completion of the prophecy of the book and thus constitute a powerful argument for an early date prior to 70 A.D. for John s revelation. The book of Revelation clearly fits into the time frame of Daniel's "seventy weeks." Therefore, those who argue for continued revelation do so at the peril of their souls since they are urging men to violate this Scriptural warning.

Another passage that sheds important light on the penalty for giving false revelation is in Zechariah thirteen. The context of this section of Zechariah places it in the first century. See Zechariah 11:13; 12:10; 13:1; 13:7. Consider this warning not to add to God's word:

It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the Lord. And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. (Zechariah 13:3) (NKJ)

The giving of revelation has ceased. This passage is in harmony with Daniel 9:24. The phrase "If anyone still prophesies" makes it clear that prophecy has ended. The death penalty is required for those

who give new revelation. Why? On account of the fact that it is false revelation. This is the consistent theme of Scripture. See Rev. 22:18,19; Gal. 1:8,9; Deut. 13:5.

This final passage is the most important verse in our study:

God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he also made the worlds. (Heb. 1:1,2)

This passage in Hebrews makes it clear that Christ Jesus is the final and complete revelation of God. God in times past spoke through the prophets. Now, He speaks through Christ. God speaks to us in and through the Scriptures which Jesus said "testify of me" (John 5:39). Jesus also admonished his disciples saying "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

Christ is the head corner stone of the church's foundation. New alleged revelations are nothing more than attempts to rebuild or add to the foundation of the church. Any attempt to add to Scripture is a direct attack upon the person and work of Christ. In conclusion it can be said: the voice of Scripture "*Vox Scriptura*," is assuredly, the voice of God "*Vox Dei*." The testimony from Scripture itself leads to the realization that the Scriptures are sufficient and the final court of appeal or *Sola Scriptura* as the men of the reformation put it.

## **F. Objections:**

1. Someone may cite passages like Deut. 4:2 and claim that this verse teaches the closing of the canon at this point in redemptive history.

Passages of this nature refer to the prohibiting of man from adding to Scripture.

2. Someone may cite a passage like John 21:25 to refute the passage of John 14:26.

John 14:26 certainly does not mean that Jesus taught his apostles all about the occult and deviant sexual practices.

John 14:26 is understood in relation to passages like II Peter 1:3 and II Tim. 3:16,17. It is admitted that not every word of Christ and the apostles is recorded in the Bible. It is not admitted that what is not recorded is Scripture.

3. It may be objected that passages like John 10:35, and II Tim. 3:16,17 refer only to the Old Testament and cannot be used to prove the completion of Scripture.

It is admitted that these passages do primarily refer to the Old Testament. The New Testament is also



Scripture, so the passages in question indirectly refer to the New Testament.

4. A number of "straw man" arguments could be raised against the above view of Scripture.

Arguments of this nature do not overthrow the view outlined above.

The canon of Scripture is what God has preserved for His Church. Providentially God did not preserve every last word Jesus uttered. Why? That is a question that rests with the secret counsel of God (Duet. 29:29).

We can be sure that with God's perfect control of all things we can know that we have "all things" that God has commanded us for life and doctrine. This view of Scripture does not invalidate the use of historical information, tradition, commentaries, confessions, creeds and teachers. Scripture however, is the final court of appeal, and Scripture should test all things.

Now we will examine the doctrine of God. First we will survey some well-known teachings from Mormon leaders concerning their view of God. Then we will look at Scripture itself.

## **The Nature of God**

### **The Mormon View**

In the book *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* we have Mormon founder Joseph Smith's view concerning God. For example, we have Smith teaching the following:

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! . . . for 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, and take away the veil, so that you may see.... It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea that God himself, the Father of us all dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did; and I will show it from the Bible.<sup>13</sup>

Mormon apostle James Talmage in his work *Articles Of Faith* tells us about the Father-god of Mormonism:

...His person cannot be in more than one place at any time. Admitting the personality of God, we are compelled to accept the fact of His materiality;...<sup>14</sup>

In the same book by Talmage we learn about the changing, i.e., progressing god of Mormonism:

Mormonism claims that all nature, both on earth and in heaven, operates on a plan of advancement; that the very Eternal Father is a progressive Being;...<sup>15</sup>

In the *Doctrine and Covenants* we learn this about the Mormon god:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

Again in the *Doctrine and Covenants* we learn about the eternal nature of man. This by implication tells us much about the nature of the Mormon god:

Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.<sup>17</sup>

In the *Journal of Discourses* Joseph Smith tells us this about God:

God himself is increasing and progressing in knowledge, power, and dominion, and will do so worlds without end.<sup>18</sup>

In the Mormon work *History of the Church* we learn more about Smith's views concerning God. Not only does Smith's god change, but also polytheism is a position that is also promoted. Smith tells us here about his polytheistic beliefs:

I will preach on the plurality of Gods. [sic] I have selected this text for that express purpose. I wish to declare I have always and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods. It has been preached by the Elders for fifteen years.<sup>19</sup>

Not only are there supposedly many gods in the universe, there are apparently just as many redeemers, tempters, and planets. In the *Journal of Discourses* Brigham Young, second prophet of the Mormon religion, tells us this:

He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Is it so on any other earth? On every earth. How many earths are there? I observed this morning that you may take the particles of matter composing this earth, and if they could be enumerated they would only be a beginning to the number of the creations of God; and they are continually coming into existence, and undergoing changes and passing through the same experience that we are

passing through.... Consequently every earth has its redeemer, and every earth has its tempter;...<sup>20</sup>

Early Mormon leader Orson Pratt faithfully following Joseph Smith in his book titled *The Seer* tells about the Mormon scheme of reality:

We were begotten by our Father in Heaven; the person of our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father; and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father; and so on, from generation to generation, from one heavenly world to another still more ancient, until our minds are wearied and lost in the multiplicity of generations and successive worlds, and as a last resort, we wonder in our minds, how far back the genealogy extends, and how the first world was formed and the first father was begotten.<sup>21</sup>

Contemporary Mormon writer W. Cleon Skousen in his book *The First 2000 Years* has drawn together some of these teachings and brought out the implications that this view of reality holds:

From the scriptures it is obvious that the Father was somehow subject to an impelling circumstance which made it impossible for Him to bring us back into His presence by acting directly or through His own initiative.... God is omnipotent, but only within the circumscribed boundaries of law, truth and justice. He cannot violate these or He would cease to be God.... In other words, if eternal principles were violated, God could cease to be God!... Through modern revelation we learn that the universe is filled with vast numbers of intelligences, and we further learn the Elohim is God simply because all of these intelligences honor and sustain Him as such. In other words, as God extended His power and influence throughout His great kingdom, He did so by obtaining the voluntary cooperation and support of vast concourses of intelligences.... Therefore, the Father is actually dependent upon their sustaining influence or honor to accomplish His purposes.... His glory and power is something which He slowly acquired until today "all things bow in humble reverence." But since God "acquired" the honor and sustaining influence of "all things" it follows as a correlary [sic] that if He should ever do anything to violate the confidence or "sense of justice" of these intelligences, they would promptly withdraw their support, and the "power" of God would disintegrate.... Our Heavenly Father can do only those things which the intelligences under Him are voluntarily willing to support Him in accomplishing.<sup>22</sup>

In summary it could be said that the Mormon god was once a man who lived on a different planet. He

somehow became a god, and with the help of other gods brought this earth into its present form. There are many other gods in the universe. These gods have physical bodies and are actually dependent upon lesser intelligences for their status as god. These physical gods are limited to being in only one place at a time. They progress or change and become more powerful in their knowledge and their dominion.

Let us now conduct a brief survey of Scripture. Does the testimony of Scripture support these Mormon ideas? Or, does Scripture flatly contradict these Mormon notions? Keep in mind that the Mormon position involves three major concepts:

1- Polytheism; 2- a limited or finite god who lived on another planet and is essentially a big man; 3- Eternal progression. The Mormon concept makes God into someone who is not unique. He is simply one god among many, and dependent upon forces outside himself for his status as God.

### **The Christian View of God:**

Hear, O Israel the LORD our God is one LORD: (Deut. 6:4)

This is called the *Shema*, the central confession of faith of the Old Testament covenant people. This was a distinctive belief of the people of Israel, setting them apart from all pagan concepts of god.

All of the following verses will clearly demonstrate that the God of the Bible is completely different from the Mormon god, who changes and is essentially nothing more than a super-man. The following verses prove God's spiritual nature and his attributes that set him apart from finite or limited men. Numerous passages prove that God is not a man because of the fact that God is the creator. God sets himself apart from sinful men by clear declarations. How many verses does it take to prove that God is not a man who changes? Consider carefully the passages in this section to see if the quotations by various Mormons are in harmony with the Bible.

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent:... (Num. 23:19)

Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he. (Isaiah 41:4)

Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (Isaiah 43:10)

...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. (Isaiah 44:6)

I am the LORD , and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me, I am the LORD, and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:5-6)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, (Isaiah 46:9)

God's omniscience is proved by the following verses: Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite. (Psalms 147:5)

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15:3)

Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. (Isaiah 41:21-24)

In the above verse God compares His knowledge with that of all false gods.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Acts (15:18)

... And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (John 21:17)

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:13)

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knowest all things. (I John 3:20)

God's omnipresence is seen in the following verses:

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold,

heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house which I have built! (II Chron. 6:18)

Wither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (Psalms 139:7)

Thus Saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (Isaiah 66:1)

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? (Jer. 23:24)

Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. (Amos 9:2)

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. (Acts 17:24-28)

God's omnipotence is seen in the following verses:

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:3)

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Rev. 1:8)

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. (Psalms 90:2)

These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove

thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. (Psalms 50:21)

I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee (Job 42:2)

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. (Jer. 32:17)

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter the city. (Hosea 11:9)

For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. (Psalms 96:5)

For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. (Psalms 102:26-27)

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (Matt. 19:26)

God's spiritual nature is proved by the following two verses:

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. (Luke 24:39)

It should be abundantly clear that the God of Holy Scripture is not the finite changeable god of Mormonism. One final Scripture reference will be given before going on to the next section.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. (Romans 1:22-23)

## The Nature of Christ Jesus

In this section we will look at various things that different Mormons have taught about Jesus, and then compare these concepts with Scripture.

### The Mormon Jesus:

In his book *Gospel Through the Ages* Mormon authority Milton R. Hunter tells us about Jesus prior to coming to this earth:

The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of Mankind.<sup>23</sup>

Brigham Young, second prophet of the Mormon religion, gives us his views concerning Christ's birth:

When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.... Now remember from this time forth, and for ever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.<sup>24</sup>

Mormon apostle Joseph Fielding Smith concurs with this unbiblical teaching:

They tell us the Book of Mormon states that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost. I challenge that statement. The Book of Mormon teaches no such thing! Neither does the Bible.<sup>25</sup>

It is quite clear that Mormonism rejects the Biblical teaching concerning Christ's virgin birth. Mormon apostle Bruce R. McConkie gives us this information on Christ's birth:

Christ was begotten by an immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers.<sup>26</sup>

Early Mormon apostle Orson Hyde made the following startling statements:

It will be borne in mind that once on a time, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and on a careful reading of that transaction, it will be discovered that no less a person than Jesus Christ was married on that occasion. If he was never married, his intimacy with Mary, Martha, and the other Mary also whom Jesus loved, must have been highly unbecoming and improper to say the best



of it.<sup>27</sup>

This was not an isolated teaching of Hyde's. He taught on another occasion exactly who Christ supposedly married:

...Jesus Christ was married at Cana, that Mary, Martha and others were his wives, and that he begat children.<sup>28</sup>

In present day Mormonism marriage is seen as an essential requirement for exaltation i.e., godhood. The fact that Mormons believe that Jesus was married reveals much about their view of Christ. He was fulfilling the requirements of the Mormon program. In order for Christ to meet all the requirements to become a god he had to be married. The Mormons do say that he was already God when he was on earth. This is a contradiction in their system. Christ was supposedly born as a spirit child in the pre-existent world. He, according to Mormon theology, was our elder brother. He was not always God. He needed to meet the requirements that the following two quotations outline.

Consider the following statement of Joseph F. Smith:

No exaltation without marriage.<sup>29</sup>

Bruce McConkie says basically the same thing:

...celestial marriage is the gate to exaltation...<sup>30</sup>

Jedediah M. Grant, another early Mormon leader gives us more information of this strange Mormon teaching concerning plural marriage:

The grand reason of the burst of public sentiment in anathemas upon Christ and his disciples, causing his crucifixion, was evidently based upon polygamy, according to the testimony of the philosophers who rose in that age. A belief in the doctrine of plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus and his followers. We might think they were Mormons.<sup>31</sup>

According to Mormonism Jesus is really not all that different from us. He is just further along the path of eternal progression. Brigham Young explains how Christ is not all that different from other men:

When the time came that His first-born, the Saviour, should come into the world and take a tabernacle, the Father came Himself and favoured that spirit with a tabernacle instead of letting any other man do it. The Saviour was begotten by the Father of His spirit, by the same being who is the Father of our spirits, and that is all

the organic differences between Jesus Christ and you and me.<sup>32</sup>

Since according to Brigham young there is no real organic difference between Christ and us it is not surprising to find out that Mormonism denies that Christ's blood is sufficient to save us from certain sins. Confessing Christ with our lips and believing in our hearts that the Father raised Jesus from the dead apart from works will be soul damning according to Mormonism.

In the Mormon pamphlet *What the Mormons Think Of Christ* we read:

Christians speak often of the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. Much that is believed and taught on this subject, however, is such utter nonsense and so palpably false that to believe it is to lose one's salvation. For instance, many believe or pretend to believe that if we confess Christ with our lips and avow that we accept him as our personal Savior, we are thereby saved. They say that his blood, without any other act than mere belief, makes us clean.<sup>33</sup>

Mormon leader Joseph F. Smith sets forth this idea:

Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they place the transgressors beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore, their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far is possible in their behalf.<sup>34</sup>

The two above quotations tell us by implication much about the Mormon view of Christ. The Jesus of Mormonism is unable to save certain people by his sacrifice. Since according to Mormonism Jesus is basically the same as us, this would explain why his death is insufficient to save sinners. The sinner's own death, and shed blood can do what Christ's cannot.

According to Mormonism the Father and Son are two completely separate gods. The Father is *Elohim* and Jesus is *Jehovah*. James Talmage sets forth the following:

The purport of these scriptures is to the effect that God the Eternal Father, whom we designate by the exalted name-title "Elohim" is the literal Parent of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the spirits of the human race.... With this meaning, as the context shows in every case, Jehovah who is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim, is called "the Father," and even "the very eternal Father of heaven and of earth".... That Jesus Christ, whom we also know as Jehovah, was the executive of the Father, Elohim, in the work

of creation is set forth in the book Jesus the Christ, chapter 4...<sup>35</sup>

In summary, it can be said that the Mormon Jesus is the spirit brother of the devil, the Holy Ghost did not beget him. He was married, had children, practiced polygamy, was crucified because of polygamy, he is organically the same as mortal men, his sacrifice is insufficient for certain sins, and he is *Jehovah* whereas the Father is *Elohim*.

## The Christian View of Jesus

The following scriptures will make clear that Jesus could not have been the devil's brother. The first passage deals with Lucifer and his fall. This is widely recognized by Bible scholars:

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God;... Thou art the annointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. (Eze. 28:13-15)

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: (Col. 1:16)

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (I Cor. 8:6)

All things were made by him; and without him was not any made that was made. (John 1:3)

Lucifer is a created being according to the passage in Ezekiel. It is impossible to be the spirit brother of your own creation.

The following two passages refute the Mormon denial of the virgin birth of Christ. Please recall Joseph F. Smith's assertion that the Bible teaches "no such thing":

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall

overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:34-35)

One simple text of scripture will refute this business about Jesus getting married. It is the same one that Mormon apostle Hyde appeals to, when claiming "a careful reading of that transaction" will reveal that Jesus is getting married.

And The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. (John 2:1-2)

The *NIV* reads "invited" instead of "called". How can you be invited or called to your own wedding? Hyde talks about Christ's intimacy with Mary and Martha. Of course Christ loved them. The scripture says as much. To say that when Christ loved Mary and Martha this means Jesus had intimate sexual relations is to force ideas into the text that there is simply no warrant for doing. I can see homosexuals using Hyde's method of Bible interpretation to prove that Jesus and John had an UN-natural relationship. For example in John 21:7 where the text says: "...that disciple whom Jesus loved..." Enough of this blasphemous Mormon nonsense!

Other passages of scripture refute polygamous and adulterous unions. There were cases in the Old Testament of marriages of this type but it was not God's intended order. The following passages make it absolutely clear. Some passages will be listed and the reader can consult them himself.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Gen. 2:18,24)

Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. (Lev. 18:18)

Consider the restrictions placed upon the high priest:

And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. (Lev. 21:13-14)

Consider also the restrictions placed upon the King:

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself,... (Deut. 17:17)

Jesus Christ was and is the true Prophet, Priest, and King so it is impossible for Jesus to have been a polygamist.

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh, What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (Matt. 19:4-6)

Polygamy is forbidden to Church officers:

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife,... (I Tim. 3:2)

The following passages bear much light about the effects of polygamous marriages: Gen. 35:22; Gen. 37:18-28; I Kings 11:1-12; II Sam. 13:1-29. Consider also Gen. 16:4-16 and Gal. 4:21-31. Paul refers to the Galatians passage in which he condemns works-righteousness. As you consult some of the above passages notice the evil results that happen to the people who practice these types of marriages. One thinks particularly of David and Solomon.

In response to Brigham Young's strange, UN-Biblical ideas about the organic similarity that allegedly we have to Jesus, the following passages demonstrate that Jesus is the absolutely unique Son of God.

In The beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1,14) By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Psalms 33:6)

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Heb. 11:3)

The Mormon concept that Jesus is *Jehovah* and the Father is *Elohim* and thus, two completely separate Gods can be refuted by the following verses:

Here, O Israel: The LORD [*Jehovah*] our God [*Elohim*] is one LORD: [*Jehovah*] (Deut. 6:4)

O LORD, [*Jehovah*] there is none like thee, neither is there any God [*Elohim*] beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (I Chro. 17:20)

But the LORD [*Jehovah*] is the true God, [*Elohim*] he is the living God,... (Jer. 10:10)

## **The Holy Ghost**

### **The Mormon View**

In this section we will briefly consider the Mormon view of the Holy Ghost. The Mormons differentiate between the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of God.

Bruce McConkie gives us the Mormon understanding of the Holy Ghost. Notice the limitation of this third member of the Mormon godhead:

He is a Personage of Spirit, a Spirit Person, a Spirit Man, a Spirit entity. He can be in only one place at one time, and he does not and cannot transform himself into any other form or image that than of the Man whom he is,..<sup>36</sup>

Joseph F. Smith concurs with McConkie's view:

The Holy Ghost should not be confused with the Spirit which fills the immensity of space and which is everywhere present. This other Spirit is impersonal and has no size, nor dimension; it proceeds forth from the presence of the Father and the Son and is in all things. We should speak of the Holy Ghost as a personage as "he" and this other Spirit as "it," although when we speak of the power or gift of the Holy Ghost we may properly say "it".<sup>37</sup>

Those unfamiliar with Mormonism may be somewhat startled to find out that Mormonism makes two separate entities out of the Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost. It is also a bit unusual to hear someone referring the Holy Spirit as an "it".

### **The Christian View**

In *Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words* we read the following:

The Holy Spirit is spoken of under various titles in the N.T. ("Spirit" and "Ghost" are renderings of the same word pneuma; the advantage of the rendering "Spirit" is that it can always be used, whereas "Ghost" always requires the "Holy" prefixed.)<sup>38</sup>

On the same page Vine goes on to say concerning the use or absence of the article:

The use or absence of the article in the original where the Holy Spirit is spoken of cannot always be decided by grammatical

rules, nor can the presence or absence of the article alone determine whether the reference is to the Holy Spirit. Examples where the Person is meant when the article is absent are Matt. 22:43 (the article is used in Mark 12:36); Acts 4:25; R.V. (absent in some texts); 19:2,6; Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 2:4; Gal. 5:25 (twice); I Pet. 1:2. Sometimes the absence is to be accounted for by the fact the *Pneuma* (like *Theos*) is substantially a proper name e.g., John 7:39.<sup>39</sup>

The Spirit is not an "it", but the same person as the Holy Ghost. And furthermore, if *Pneuma* is substantially a proper name the labeling of *Pneuma* as an "it" is a direct attack on the personality and deity of the third member of the Godhead.

Note how the apostle Paul uses "Spirit" and "Ghost" interchangeably:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit [Pneuma] of God dwelleth in you? (I Cor. 3:16)

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [*Pneuma*] which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (I Cor. 6:19)

Two more verses will be listed to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost are not two separate entities:

...for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost [Pneuma]. (Matt. 1:20)

For as many as are led by the Spirit [*Pneuma*] of God, they are the sons of God. (Rom. 8:14)

## **The Godhead**

In this section we will consider the Mormon concept of the Godhead in relation to the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

## **The Mormon View**

Joseph Smith in the *History of the Church* tells us what is still today the un-questioned view of God within Mormonism:

Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are only one God! I say that is a strange God anyhow--

three in one, and one in three! It is a curious organization.... He would be a wonderfully big God-- he would be a giant or a monster.<sup>40</sup>

In the Provo, Utah, paper *The Herald* we find Mormon apostle Bruce McConkie's ideas concerning Biblical teaching. In this devotional speech given at Brigham Young University McConkie is discussing the major heresies of Christianity. The two quotations are the words of the paper, and McConkie himself as quoted by the paper:

The first great heresy, he said, pertains to the nature of God, the doctrine of the trinity. McConkie said the doctrine of a "three-in-one" God filled the universe after Christ died, and the adoption of the false image "destroyed the true worship of God."<sup>41</sup>

These two quotations along with Joseph Smith's first vision story make it quite clear that Mormonism has always rejected the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity. In Smith's first vision we have the message given to Smith. It is found in the Mormon book *Pearl Of Great Price*. The story goes like this:

I was answered that I must join none of them, [all existing churches] for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof".<sup>42</sup>

In this complete rejection of all existing churches, you find that this rejection includes all doctrine or creeds, which includes the doctrine of the Trinity. It should be noted that Mormons would say that they believe in the Trinity, but the Christian must be aware that there has been a substantial redefinition of the word Trinity.

## **The Christian View**

### **The Trinity:**

In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Westminster Confession Of Faith Chap. II, 3.

In all my dealing with Mormons over the years I have never met a Mormon who could accurately state the doctrine of the Trinity. It speaks volumes when someone or a religious movement rejects an opposing view without even understanding the position that is being rejected. If someone cannot state



an opposing position, they clearly do not understand it. The common Mormon reason for rejecting the Trinity is that they cannot understand or comprehend that kind of God. If God is God and we are men it should not surprise us that we cannot completely comprehend God. If we could do this, then God would be nothing more than a finite individual. Mormons cannot understand or comprehend how they re own brain functions. Why not reject their brains? In this respect, Mormons are operational rationalists. Rationalism is a philosophy where human reason becomes the standard of truth.

For the Christian the Bible is our standard of truth, not human reason. Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* correctly defines the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine is stated in a series of propositions:

1- There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence; 2- In this one Divine Being there are three Persons or individual subsistences, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; 3- The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons; 4- The subsistence and operation of the three persons in the divine Being is marked by a certain definite order; 5- There are certain personal attributes by which the three persons are distinguished.<sup>43</sup>

A definition that is more suited to the lay person would be:

Within the nature of the one true God, there are three eternal Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Or, it could be said God is One with respect to His nature or substance and three in respect to Persons.

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father; the Son is not the Spirit; and the Father is not the Spirit. God **is not** one person who manifests or reveals himself in three different modes. There is only one God in essence, who truly exists as three divine persons. The Christian is honestly handling the word of God by saying there is only one God. The Christian is also correct in saying that there are three persons who are God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Bible makes it indisputable that there is only one God:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD. (Deut. 6:4)

YI am he: before me there was no God formed. Neither shall there be after me, I, even I, am LORD, And beside me there is no saviour. (Isaiah 43:10)

YI am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. (Isaiah 44:6)

Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any?  
(Isaiah 44:8)

The Bible teaches the Father is God in the following verses:

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(Romans 1:7)

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 1:3)

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Cor. 1:2)

The Father is *Jehovah*:

In Exodus 3:13,14 God (*Elohim*) reveals Himself as the "I Am" or *Jehovah* the Lord.

The Father is both *Jehovah* and *Elohim*:

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD [*Jehovah*] God [*Elohim*] made the earth and the heavens. (Gen. 2:4)

And the LORD [*Jehovah*] God [*Elohim*] planted a garden Eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (Gen. 2:8)

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God (*Elohim*) of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he Said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM [*Jehovah*] hath sent me unto you. (Exodus 3:13.14)

The Son is proved to be God by the following verses:

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.  
(Heb. 1:8)

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. 2:9)

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in

him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (I John 5:20)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13)

Jesus is *Jehovah*:

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say you, before Abraham was, I am [*Jehovah*] (John 8:58)

Jesus is using the divine name from Exodus 3:14. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) uses (*Ego eimi*) for *Jehovah* (I AM) in this verse. John 8:58 in the Greek uses the same formulation (*Ego eimi*). It is inescapable that Jesus is *Jehovah*.

Isaiah 45:23 says "That unto me [*Jehovah*] every knee shall bow)". The New Testament in Phil. 2:10 tells us that this verse speaks of Jesus. Jesus is *Jehovah*.

The following passage speaks of *Jehovah*:

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. (Ps. 68:18)

The next verse from Ephesians speaks of Jesus with the wording from Psalms 68:18. This makes Jesus *Jehovah*.

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Eph. 4:8)

Jeremiah the prophet records:

I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. (Jer. 17:10)

What does the New Testament teach about Jesus that identifies him with *Jehovah* whom Jeremiah spoke? Consider what John says in Revelation 2:23.

I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. (Rev. 2:23)

More passages could be cited from the Old Testament in which the New Testament writers apply to Christ. The above two examples should be sufficient. In addition, consider Christ's following claim:

I and my Father are one. (John 10:30)

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him." (John 10:31) Why? Jesus was clearly claiming to be *Jehovah* God this verse.

The Holy Spirit is called God in the following verses:

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? ... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. (Acts 5:3-4)

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (I Cor. 3:16)

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: (Heb. 3:7,8) See Ps. 95:7,8.

The Holy Spirit is not some kind of impersonal force like the Jehovah's Witnesses claim, or like electricity that fills the Universe as one Mormon apostle taught. As seen clearly from Acts 5:3,4 the Holy Spirit is a person who can be lied to. In John 14:26 the Holy Spirit is sent to teach the apostles and bring things to their remembrance. This is proof that the Holy Spirit is an intelligent member of the Godhead, a person.

The Holy Spirit is *Jehovah*:

Now the Lord [*Kyrios*] is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [*Kyrios*] is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. 3:17)

The Greek word *Kyrios* is used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) to translate *Jehovah*. *Kyrios* is translated in English with the word "Lord."

God is the creator. All three persons are involved in creation:

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (I Cor. 8:6) (Father)

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:3) (Son)

The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty

hath given me life. (Job 33:4) (Spirit)

All three persons share the attributes of deity. For example, all three persons are omniscient:

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. (Acts 15:18) (Father)

And he said unto him, Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. (John 21:17b) (Son)

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (I Cor. 2:10) (Spirit)

All three persons are omnipotent:

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (Rev. 19:6) (Father)

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (Matt. 28:18) (Son)

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:... For with God nothing shall be impossible. (Luke 1:35,37) (Spirit)

All three persons are omnipresent:

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? (Jer. 23:24) (Father)

...and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Amen. (Matt. 28:20) (Son)

Wither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (Psalms 139:7) (Spirit)

The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are all eternal:

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets,

according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: (Ro. 16:26) (Father)

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. (Heb. 13:8) (Son)

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit... (Heb. 9:14) (Spirit)

All three persons of the Trinity dwell in us. Only God can do this:

Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:23) (Father)

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love. (Eph. 3:17) (Son)

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:17) (Spirit)

All three persons of the Trinity were involved in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Only God can raise the dead:

Paul, An apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead:) (Galatians 1:1) (Father)

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.... But he spake of the temple of his body. (John 2:18-20) (Son)

For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: (I Peter 3:18) (Spirit)

We see all three persons at the baptism of Christ. These are persons, not modes of existence:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom

I am well pleased. (Matt. 3:16,17)

We see all three persons at the Great Commission:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Matt. 28:19)

We see all three persons of the Trinity in one of Paul's letters:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. (II Cor. 13:14)

How many Gods are there in the Bible? The Bible is abundantly clear on this. Two verses are sufficient to put an end to polytheism forever:

...Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. (Isa. 44:8)

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: (Mark 12:32)

The Bible teaches that there are three persons who are called God, and yet the Bible is emphatic that there is only one God. The only conclusion that you can arrive at is that of the above definition by Louis Berkof. The Christian proceeds biblically. We are not rationalists. There stands nothing above God. Human reason is not the test of truth. Many of the cults reject the doctrine of the Trinity because it is allegedly irrational. This does not mean that we reject the use of logic and reason. We are thankful for these gifts from God. We recognize the human limitations of the tools that God has given us. Human reason is not the ultimate standard. Those who use this as the standard have become rationalists.

I am only making this point about proceeding biblically because all forms of unbelief start with some form of human autonomy. The Mormon will not accept the God of the Bible because he or she cannot comprehend such a God. They have set up human reason as a judge to determine what they will accept. This places the Mormon in the camp of idolatry.

Much more could be said about the areas of our survey so far. I have limited the quotations so as not to overwhelm the reader. In part two we will consider other important topics as they relate to the Bible and beliefs held by Mormons.

## **End notes**

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Note: I want to express my indebtedness to Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen for two lectures that have deeply influenced my thinking in the area of the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures. These two lectures are titled *Is Sola Scriptura sufficient for today?* And *Is Sola Scriptura a Protestant Concoction?* These lectures can be obtained from the Covenant Tape Ministry.