

Judges 08-02-29a

This is Friday the 29th of February 2008. We continue our study in the book of Judges. We're in chapter 4 and moving into chapter 5 where the song of Deborah and Barak is given.

We'll take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer. It's an opportunity to focus our concentration, to wake up and activate the fast fading memories of what we covered last week and the week before that in this book and to prepare ourselves and to cultivate an understanding of God's word in the light of the ministry of God's spirit. Shall we pray? Father, we recognize the grace that has been expressed toward us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We appreciate his character, we appreciate his work, we appreciate his diligent faithfulness to every aspect of your plan and purpose during his first advent and we know that when he returns he will be equally faithful and equally diligent to implement and fulfill all of the covenanted promises both to Israel and to us. We are thankful for this opportunity to study your word together. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will give us an awareness and a perception and an understanding that transcends our mere human intellect and our mere human mind and that we will see in these pages and in these selections from your word the truth that we need to sustain us in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We have seen this problem arising from the restoration of the enemy that had once been defeated back in Joshua chapter 11.

It is a sad thing to think that you've got a problem fixed and come to find out it's not. It is a sad thing when you have defeated an enemy, you have driven an enemy out, you have destroyed a city, burned it to the ground and a generation or two later here's another enemy with the same name, king's got the same name, setting up shop in the same town, camping on top of the rubble that you burned down and thought that you had eliminated as a threat. But that's exactly the situation that we find after the death of Shamgar.

Shamgar was a great example, a great inspiration to his people and as was Ehud and as long as Ehud was alive. If you look at the spiritual life of the people in Israel, just forget everything else. Don't worry about the Moabites, don't worry about any of the other Ites or Philistines or anybody else.

Just think about here are all the people that crossed the Jordan, came into the land, reproduced, they had offspring, generation, generation, generation. They're living in the land of promise. This is the time of fulfillment, of possession, of great prosperity and great opportunity.

This would seem to be an optimum time to develop an understanding of and relationship with God. You've got Levites scattered all through the land. You've got cities of refuge.

You've got the opportunity because there is relative peace to learn and grow in grace and

knowledge of God our Savior, if you're an Israelite. But it seems as though Israel has always needed a crisis to turn them toward God. In the wilderness, the first generation, crises turned them away from God.

They were ready to march toward Canaan until they ran out of water or they ran out of bread or they ran out of this or they got tired of that. Then there's grumbling and murmuring and complaining. Crisis turns them away from God.

This generation and the subsequent generations that are in the land are in possession of God's blessings and God's promises and it seems that crisis tends to turn them toward God. It takes a crisis to remind them of who God is. It takes a crisis to remind them of who God is.

The prosperity seems to blind them as much as the adversity blinded their fathers who were in the wilderness. This is one of the ways that God changes the parameters of the equation and shows that ultimately each one of us is a product of his or her decisions. We decide what our priorities are going to be.

We decide what our values will be. We decide what our goals for the day, for the week, for the month and for our life are going to be. We choose and you cannot blame circumstances.

We cannot blame people. We cannot blame the economy. We can't blame the state of the church.

We can't blame heredity. We can't blame environment. God has proven by this sort of experiment if you will, experiment in the old sense of the word.

They used to talk what we now call experiential. For example, three kinds of sanctification. There's our initial sanctification at the point of salvation.

Then we have an experiential sanctification as our experience of daily life. We try to pursue holiness. Then there's ultimate sanctification when the Lord comes back and resurrection bodies, etc.

In the old days when those three categories were first developed and labeled, it was our initial sanctification, experimental sanctification. Experiment was a synonym for experience. If you think about it, well, I'm going to perform an experiment.

In other words, I'm going to do this in a way that I can experience the results. I'm going to learn what these two chemicals do by experience. I'm not just going to predict it by looking at the Bohr model of the atom and the valence of the electrons and etc.

I'm not going to predict that it's going to be an ionic or a covalent bond. I'm going to mix them together and I will learn it by experience, by experiment. Experimental.

They say, well, life is an experiment. In the old sense, that statement was true. Life is an experience.

We learn things by experience, by experiment. Now, experiment means, well, I'm going to do something. I don't know what the heck is going to happen.

Let's conduct an experiment. Let's see what will happen. The origin of that term is experience.

Here are the people in the land experiencing prosperity, experiencing fulfillment. They grow dull. They grow apathetic.

They grow distracted. They grow content. They begin to amalgamate and to syncretize and to dilute and pollute their faith and their relationship with God.

It happens slowly. It happens gradually. The only way God can wake them up is to put them into the hand of their enemy.

Now, as I have mentioned in times past, I think all of us would agree that it is much better to observe and learn from the experimental mistakes of others than to experiment with that kind of failure ourselves and have to learn it the hard way. I think you and I would much rather look at this syndrome with the living in the land generations of Israelites and say, you know what? That prosperity is kind of a dangerous thing. That reasonable contentment and freedom from attack is kind of a dangerous thing.

It has its points. It's a lot of fun. It's great to have blessing and it's great to be free from harassment and persecution.

You think about this generation of church in our country, in this state, in this town today. When you think about people in generations in times past where your Christianity could get you killed, there are places on the earth today where your Christianity can get you killed. It was not but a few months back that there were Christians in the offices of a Christian publishing house overseas who were taken hostage by extremists, tortured in horrible, unspeakable ways, and essentially tortured to death because they were publishing Christian materials in a neighborhood and in a country where extremists from another religion took offense and took exception and felt that they were justified by their faith in slaughtering, literally, these young men in a horrible, I can't even begin to give you the details of what happened.

That happened in 2007, late 2007. It can happen in the world. We take for granted that our Christianity is pretty trouble free.

It doesn't cost us much to be a Christian. We're not fighting the Amalekites or fighting battles to take the land. We're in the land.

We possess the land. We have the opportunity that this generation had to not only enjoy the fulfillment of God's blessings and God's promises, but to look at the reason for this prosperity. Why would God give his people Canaan land? Why would he do that? Why would he just give them their own land and their own possession? What would God's goal for that be? So that they get tired and apathetic and distracted and indifferent? Or so that they could recognize the

positive side of his character? He had been a God of judgment.

He had been a God of testing. He had been a God of discipline for their fathers who were in slavery and their fathers who were the first generation out of Egypt. And God says, I've shown you my righteousness and my judgment.

I want to also show you my love and my loyalty and my chesed, my faithfulness to covenant promises to your fathers. You are beloved for the sake of your fathers. I am going to give you this good land that I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I want to show you what a good and gracious and gifting God I can be. And yet in giving those things, people who do not focus on the God who gives and instead get occupied with the gift, it becomes the means of their destruction. This is the message of the book of Judges.

So we find here that they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. The anger of the Lord burned against Israel. Well, this is the same thing that happened to the fathers in the wilderness.

It doesn't seem that if you put people on a journey and they're kind of in a Bedouin, traveling, stripped down, no possession mode, well, they mess up. And God gets angry with them because they're complaining that they don't have prosperity, they don't have great food, they don't have a place to call their own. And they complain and murmur.

And so God takes a later generation into the land and they've got everything and they turn away from God. And the only way he can turn them back to himself is by getting their attention through adversity, the same kind of adversity that their fathers faced in the wilderness and complained about. And so we want to observe.

We want to learn from this. We want to be sharp. We want to remember that we have been gifted.

We have been granted great and precious promises, the fulfillment. We have a preview of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit that will be poured out on all flesh in the millennial kingdom, we've got it now.

The possession of insight into divine truth and appreciation for God's Son, God's plan and purpose that won't come to Israel in its fullness until they are taught in the land, we have now. The fullness of divine revelation. Israel didn't have it in the Old Testament.

We have it now. We can look back at the cross and see the fulfillment of all of those shadows and feasts and sacrifices and ritualistic regulations. We can see it.

It's all clear. And yet, we're easily distracted. We easily get lazy.

We easily start looking at the gift rather than the giver. And we enjoy the prosperity and the peace and we forget that it's been given for a purpose. We are free from distraction and that

increases both our opportunity and our responsibility to pursue God.

Why would God give us freedom from persecution? Why would God give us freedom from harassment? If He wanted to keep us looking to Him and praying down on our knees and sweating for divine provision and divine protection all the time, well, stick us in a communist country 60 or 70 years ago. Put us in some countries today where you could be persecuted and hounded and tortured and executed for your faith. That will keep you close to God.

What is His purpose in giving us this great, great bubble of blessing? Even you can complain about the way things are going. People have been complaining about that ever since Adam and Eve walked out of the garden. It's all downhill from there.

But, relatively speaking, we are so prosperous. We are so blessed. Why would God do that? It's for a purpose.

Who is going to meet that challenge, the challenge of distraction? The result for these people is that God has to deliver them into the hand, sells them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan. Resurrects an old enemy. Resurrects an old capital.

This is significant. This is the drumstick beating on the head. Hey, ever seen this guy before? Ever heard of this city before? Don't you know that this is a long ago victory and now you're going to have to fight this all over again because you have given away your victory.

You've given away your spoils. You've given away your blessing. You're going to have to retake that.

You're going to have to go back and do it again. This will happen to us spiritually as well. Now, we need to be sharp.

We need to be knowledgeable. We need to be ready always to give an answer to any man that asks. I was thinking about that this week.

Give an answer to any man that asks you a reason for the hope that's in you. Mormons came to my door this week. Two bright, intelligent, very earnest young men came to the door and the conversation followed somewhat predictable lines.

I came out and they greeted me and I greeted them. They had their little name tags on that said they were from the LDS Persuasion. I said, I don't know how much you all have to do this afternoon, but I can save you some time because I'm the pastor and teacher in a Bible church.

I'm committed to the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. I really don't think that you will be able to change my mind and my persuasion on that score. They said, well, I appreciate that.

We understand that, but... and then they said, have you ever thought about the Book of Mormon? Have you ever prayed over the Book of Mormon, one thing or another? Well, it reminded me that we are here for a purpose. It's easy and I've heard, I've got friends who, you

know, Mormon, a Jehovah's Witness come to the door. This is a time to slam the door, to shoo them away with great wavings of hands and intense negativity.

That doesn't accomplish anything. Anybody can feel like a martyr if they are shooed away for their faith. You and I know enough of the Word of God, and I say you and I mean you, you know enough of the Word of God, I know enough of the Word of God that we can give a reason for the hope that is in us that is not in them.

And we have a hope that they don't have. We have an understanding that they don't have. And if they're willing to talk, so am I. You want to ask questions, I'll give you answers.

And so, well, have you ever read the Book of Mormon? Yes, I have. Well, what did you think of it? Exercising all my self-control, I said, well, I think it is the product of a relatively uneducated man in the early 1800s who did not know the rules of English as they existed in the days of Shakespeare and the translation of the King James Bible, from which he plagiarized rather freely in constructing his book. It shows manifest signs of not being inspired.

And they said, well, why do you say that? And I'm giving you something of a summary. I talked to them for probably 20 or 25 minutes. But the two points I made are A, if the Book of Mormon were a revelation from God, it would be as it claims to be, without error.

In fact, Joseph Smith said on more than one occasion that the Book of Mormon is the most correct book on earth. If it is correct, then it will have no demonstrable errors. People had this discussion about the Scriptures.

Well, there are demonstrable contradictions and errors in the Bible. No, there are not. Show me a factual error in the Bible, and I will show you a very sound and complete refutation of it.

There is a thing on the web, I've mentioned it before, it's the Skeptic's Bible. Supposedly just got hundreds and hundreds of contradictions and errors in the Bible. I have defied several different audiences to pick any one of those and bring it to me and see if they can make it stick.

I can refute every line of the Skeptic's Bible. I've gone in there just at random. I'll go to a particular page, put my finger down, and it says, oh well, this and this and this in the Bible.

And it's erroneous. It is a lack of understanding. There's one in there about the circumference of a circle.

The Bible gives the dimensions of the great bronze sea that sat in the temple that Solomon made. And it gives a description of how high it was versus how wide it was. If you work that out using the value of pi, and work out the circumference and the diameter and the height, and compare it to what Scripture says, it's accurate to two decimal places.

It's accurate. There's not a thing wrong with it. Especially when you read the detail that says there was a lip on the thing so that the interior is that much different.

And if you calculate the thickness of that bronze and go to the Biblical description, it's accurate. 3.14. That's how accurate it is. And they try to trot this out and say, and they don't bother to read the description that says there was a band around the outside of the sea.

You'd have to. You can't make a bronze bowl that big without a reinforcing band in the same way that the old cannons used to have a reinforcing band near the muzzle to keep it from splitting. Well, this is a single large brass object that is going to be full of water.

You know how heavy water is. You know what the pressure is on the sides of a swimming pool. Well, this is like a small swimming pool.

It's huge. And the water pressure would split that thing if it were not reinforced with a band. You calculate the thickness of the band, which the Bible gives, it comes out exact.

On and on. I could go on and on. But I said, contrary to the clear and rather straightforward refutations of these type of allegations against Scripture, the Book of Mormon is replete with errors.

That thing came out in about 1830, and it has been revised numerous times. Joseph Smith revised it very shortly after he wrote it, and it has been revised and revised and revised. To date, if you take the current 1980-something edition of the Book of Mormon and compare it to the 1830 edition, there are over 4,115 changes from Joseph Smith's original text.

A lot of them corrected his mistakes in grammar. It's a translation from the Golden Plates using the Urim and the Thummim. The Urim and the Thummim didn't just give him the sense of it that he would put into his own words.

The Urim and the Thummim that he allegedly used gave him the English equivalent for these words. Interestingly enough, he says, I only got information from the plates and from no other source. Every word in the Book of Mormon came from the plates.

There are extensive quotes from Scripture. There are extensive quotes of Isaiah. There are extensive quotes from Matthew.

There are extensive quotes from the Old and New Testament. Interestingly, where the King James translation is erroneous, where it made a demonstrable error, and where all subsequent editions of the King James, when you get your New King James, or your New American Standard, or your NIV, or anybody that goes back to the Greek and Hebrew, and they say, you know, the Texas Receptus had a grievous copyist error here. This was just wrong.

Everybody knows it. Everybody acknowledges it. Everybody fixes it.

Even a good King James Bible will have a footnote there. Well, guess what? The Book of Mormon reproduces the error in toto, without comment, and without correction, because Joseph Smith was ripping it off. It's interesting.

There are lots of writings about the nature of the Book of Mormon. Go look at it sometime. Joseph Smith quotes Hamlet.

There's a line from Hamlet that's used. I've seen it. If you have to do a funeral as a pastor, you look around and you say, well, what are the right words? You know, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, read the 23rd Psalm, this, that, and the other.

I've got a really great pastor's manual that my grandfather gave me. He was a Baptist pastor. He gave me his pastor's manual.

There are several versions of funerals. I've had to do several funerals. So I look through.

In these old time, early 1900s funeral services, they always quote a line from Hamlet where it says, talking about death, he's going to that born from which no traveler returns. That line is quoted in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon was allegedly written between 600 BC and 431 AD by a series of these imaginary prophets.

So evidently Shakespeare somehow divined this line and included it in Hamlet or somebody back in 600 BC predicted what Shakespeare was going to say 2,000 years later. Some kind of way, it just came out the same. There's a story where a nephew kills his uncle and the details just follow right along Shakespeare's play.

I mean, it is to laugh. But in talking with somebody like this, there are two main points. A, if anything purports to be a revelation from God, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, anything else, God is not the author of confusion.

God is not the author of error. And if I detect an error, you should have an answer. If somebody comes to you and says there's a grievous error in the Word of God, if you can't answer right away, you should say, I'll find out, sir, and come back the next day and say this is the answer to that question because there are no errors in the Word of God.

And I'm here to tell you that you don't have to know Greek and you don't have to know Hebrew. All you have to do is take a look at Scripture. It says the walls of Jericho fell down.

Archaeologists go and lo and behold, here are fallen walls all around the town. Archaeologists dispute the date. Well, the Bible doesn't give the date, does it? The Bible says the walls fell.

They dig up the tell at Jericho and guess what? There's fallen walls all the way around the thing. The Bible says that Joshua burned Hazor to the ground in Joshua chapter 11. They go and excavate the tell at Hazor and guess what? There's a huge burn layer at the time when Joshua and the Israelites were in the land.

The Bible says that Israel was occupied in the time of Christ. You look all around there are villages and stuff all over the place. The Bible says the Israelites moved into the land of Canaan and changed the culture and there is a layer below which everything is Canaanite and after

which everything has got a whole different flavor.

There's Egyptian scarabs and there are artifacts and changes that are the result of the Israelites coming into the land. It's an archaeological fact. A lot of people can theorize, a lot of people can argue, but there is no refutation of any biblical statement at all.

You come to the Book of Mormon and it says that there was a whole group of people that came over here to the United States, the Ten Lost Tribes came over here, lived, flourished, built cities, farmed, had huge sweeping battles on wide plains with all kinds of armament and metal implements and so on. There is not a shred of archaeological data for those statements. There ought to be cities.

There ought to be vast battlefields. By the way, the Nephites and the other guys fought each other and wiped each other out so that there was nobody left. Hardly anybody left to even tell the tale.

Nobody left to clean up the mess either. If the two sides wiped each other out, there ought to be detritus, there ought to be strewn bodies and skeletons and 431 BC is not that long ago in archaeological terms. This country ought to be littered with the leftovers of the Nephites.

Look at South America. You've got Aztecs and Incas and stuff down there going back hundreds and hundreds and thousands of years and yet you've got these entire huge civilizations here in America that the Book of Mormon details and gives all their history and their battles and their cities, where they're located and all that. Nothing.

So the book is full of errors. The text that claims to be inspired by God is full of grammatical, syntactical, historical, geographical errors that are easily proven. The book contradicts itself.

The book at one point said that King Benjamin did thus and so. King Benjamin helped translate some of these early little golden plates that were laying around. Well, later on Joseph Smith realized, oops, at the time that I say he was translating these plates, I had already said that the guy was dead.

And so suddenly, with nobody taking notice, the next edition of the Book of Mormon came out and it said, well, it was King Mosiah that translated the plates instead of King Benjamin. But for the first umpteen years, all of the Books of Mormon said that it was King Benjamin. Now, it's not like you can appeal to an alternate text tradition.

There is no text tradition other than Joseph Smith. So, the text is not reliable. Secondly, and more importantly, what are the marks of divine revelation? How did the Israelites know that Moses was from God and that when he brought tablets down from Sinai, this was the Word of God? How did they know that they should follow Moses out of Egypt, that he had a message and a commission from God? How did they know? How did God authenticate his messenger? Mighty acts of power.

Stuck his hand in his shirt and brought it back out and it was leprous. Turned water to blood. Turned staffs to snakes.

Ten plagues. Three sets of three and then the death of the firstborn. Parting of the Red Sea.

I think that would be a clue that God is with you. When Moses delivered the law to the nation of Israel, they knew that he was God's messenger. He had been authenticated by miracles that everybody saw.

And those miracles occurred before he ever gave them anything. Before he gave them the Book of Genesis. Before he brought the tablets of the law and the rest of Deuteronomy and Leviticus down from the mountain.

They knew that this was God's man. There was no doubt in their mind. Came down from Sinai and his face was shining.

Where have you been? I would guess he's been talking to God. Look at his face. We've got to put a bag over his head so we can look at him.

The prophets of old were authenticated by miracles. Was Elijah a prophet of God? Anybody made an axe head float lately? Anybody taken the top off of a mountain lately? Anybody stop the weather and started the weather? Anybody raise the dead? I think Elijah and Elisha were authenticated by God as his messengers. When they went and spoke to a king and said this is the word of the Lord, nobody had any doubt that that word came from God.

Because they were prophets marked out with divine authority by divine power. How about the New Testament? What have we just learned in the Gospel of John? When Jesus came and said the Father has sent me, the people said we don't think the Father has sent you. Jesus said look, remember what Jesus said? You do not have to believe me because I'm telling you so.

You don't have to believe what I say. If you do not believe my words, believe the works for it is the works that testify of me. Now if Jesus says don't take my word for who I am, look at the works that the Father has sent to accompany me and mark me out as his messenger and as the bearer of his message.

If Jesus Christ is going to do that, I would submit to you that any other messenger that is going to come to us with a revelation from God is going to be marked out. He is not going to be better than the Lord Jesus Christ. And even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God came marked out with divine authority by divine power.

Joseph Smith came with nothing. Couldn't show anybody the glasses, couldn't show anybody the Urim and Thummim, couldn't show anybody the tablets. Produced this book.

I just want to tell you one other funny story about the production of the Book of Mormon. There was a guy that was helping. Joseph Smith had this guy who was his helper.

And he said, look I want you to copy this thing out for me. And so the guy was writing and writing and writing and writing. And he wrote and he wrote and he wrote.

And Joseph Smith was translating this set of plates that he had, allegedly. Well, this guy had been working and working and his wife got mad at him, the copyist. And the wife said, I forget his name, but the wife said, I am sick to death of you going over and spending all this time with Joseph Smith and you come home and you're tired and you're burned out.

I'm just sick of this. What are you doing? He said, well I'm copying out a revelation from God. And she said, I don't believe you.

I don't think you're copying out a revelation from God. I think you all are over there doing something nefarious. And he said, oh no dear, I've been assiduously copying this thing out.

She said, I do not believe you. So the man went back to Joseph Smith and he said, please, please, got down on his knees and begging, please let me take a copy of this manuscript to my wife and show her what I had been doing so she would get off my back. She's not going to let me come copy anymore unless I can prove to her that this is on the up and up.

Joseph Smith didn't want to let it go, but the guy talked him into it. So he took 116 pages, the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon, home with him, showed it to his wife. His wife read it and said, this is the utterest nonsense I've ever seen in my life.

And she burned it. Well, the guy went back and he was just completely unglued over this. And he said, my wife took the book.

I didn't see what she did with it, but she came back and told me that she burned it. It's gone. She says it's gone.

I can't pry any location out of her. She says she burned it. I didn't see her burn it, but that's what she says.

Well, here's the problem for Joseph Smith. Because he's going to now go back and reconstruct that 116 pages. If she didn't burn it, and she's actually still got those pages, he's operating under inspiration from God and he should be able to reproduce those 116 pages verbatim, every I, every T, exactly the same.

And he quickly realized that if she had not burned it and she was hanging on to it to discredit him, as soon as he reproduced that section and it didn't match and it wasn't the same because he was making it all up, he would be completely busted. He would be discredited. So, there's a really odd anomaly in the Book of Mormon.

He did go back and he reproduced that section, but he greatly expanded it. Greatly expanded it. And then, right at the point where he was, where the wife burned the pages, he put in a note and he said, and I forget all these guys, Nephi and Mormon and Moroni and all these different

ones.

There's a guy named Mormon and he's got a son, a Nephi. Anyway, at that point in the book, there's a strange insertion. It's a two-page insertion and it's called the Book of Mormon.

It's a two-page insertion right there where Mormon says, well, here's what happened. I was busy translating these plates and then the angel Moroni came to me and said, you know what? You're using the wrong plates. That's the short edition.

That's the summary plates. You don't want the small plates. You want the big plates.

That's what you should be translating. So, here's the big plates. So, you need to go back and start over.

And this is the fabrication that Joseph Smith came up with to defend himself should this original 116 pages ever show up. He could say, well, see, what I didn't realize was that was off the wrong set of plates. Which completely violates his original story that said, I found this golden book and there were loose plates and sealed plates.

And the angel told me that they were all bound with rings all together. And he said, you can translate the loose plates but do not translate the sealed plates. Well, the loose plates bound with the sealed plates, that's the first 116 pages.

And now he's saying, oh, oops, that was the wrong plates. Here's this other stack of plates, much more complete, much more detail. And so he went back and did this.

It's just a train wreck of a religion. I mean, I could start a better religion than this. But, here's the thing.

Let's say that you ignore all of that. Let's say you ignore the fact that there was a book called A View of the Hebrews that was written in the early 1800s by a guy that closely, there are so many correspondences, there are geographical place names in this made-up America of 300 A.D. All of the place names match. You can list like 36 of them and they all match.

The strange, you know, the hill of Cumoria where the plates were buried, one thing or another. Well, mysteriously, before he got a hold of the plates and translated this, all of this stuff had been written in an earlier book by a guy and it's called A View of the Hebrews. There is yet another book where some other elements are suspiciously similar where it was really hugely popular at the turn of the 19th century that the Ten Lost Tribes came to America and were the ancestors of the Red Men.

Hugely popular. It was all over the place. So one guy wrote this book called A View of the Hebrews where he put this forward and he made all this stuff up.

Another guy wrote a separate book. Well, interestingly, you can reconstruct almost everything in the Book of Mormon out of those two earlier books. It's been hugely ripped off and then you

interleave it with some quotes of Isaiah, one thing and another.

Put it all in King James English. Many, many times where Joseph Smith has a prophecy that's in the future, he goofs and slips into the past tense. But even if you ignored all of that, how do we know when revelation is from God? What did the Apostle Paul say in the New Testament? I have communicated to you the Gospel.

If anybody comes to you with another Gospel, even if it's an angel from God, oddly enough, the angel Moroni came down and resurrected Mormon or Nephi or one of those guys to help Joseph Smith decipher these plates. And they managed to work through wrong plates and there's a big black hole right in the middle of the book where there's a big section that was lost. But the authentication for any messenger of God, you can't claim to be an angel.

Satan masquerades as an angel of light. God will authenticate his messenger. You will know in your heart.

If you are guided by the Holy Spirit, truly, not just claiming to be or wishing you were or hoping to be, but if you are guided by God's Holy Spirit, you will recognize. If any man is in the faith, he will know of the truth, whether I speak from God or speak for myself. Jesus himself said, you will know of the doctrine.

Paul said the same thing. You will know the truth when you see it and when you hear it. If you ask, it will be given.

If you seek, you will find. And one of the ways you will know it is the truth, one of the ways we know that the 66 books of our scripture are inspired is that they are all delivered from men. You look at the New Testament.

It's all either apostles or someone who was a first-hand companion of an apostle. Luke, companion of Paul. Mark, companion of Peter.

Jude and James, companions of the Lord Jesus himself. All of those books are authenticated by the direct call of the Lord Jesus or these guys were an amanuensis and a writer associated with and approved of by one of those first-generation apostles. Nobody else writes scripture.

That same determination was made for the Old Testament books. They are either produced by Moses or they are produced as a record of God's messengers and God's apostles. They were recognized as such.

They were collated and brought together. In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, all of those books were recognized. There was no dispute about those books for hundreds of years.

By the time of the Septuagint, they were recognized as a unit. You ask yourself the question, because the Book of Mormon says that in 431 A.D., this huge war between whoever it was, the Lehi's and the Nephi's, they attacked each other, slaughtered each other, wiped each other out,

and Christianity perished. Jesus' church perished.

This is the message of the Book of Mormon. It got further and further away from the things of God and it ultimately destroyed itself. There was no church until 1830, when God decided that he would resurrect it.

You have to ask yourself the question, if we need the Book of Mormon for revelation, why did God wait until 1830 to give it to us? What about all those people between Jesus and the apostles in 1830? What were they supposed to do? Without this most essential book that is the most correct book and clearly reveals and explains all of the earlier scriptures, how did people survive without it? There was no Christian church in those periods. That's how they explained it away. So God decided he would do it through Joseph Smith.

What did Jesus say to the apostle Peter? What's the first thing a Catholic will tell you about Peter? What did Jesus say to him? You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. You are Petras, and upon this Petra, I will build my church, and what? The gates of hell will not prevail against it. The gates of hell, that's the power of death.

That's what the gates of hell is. It's a euphemism, it's a metaphor for the power of death. I will establish my church on the profession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and the power of death itself will not prevail against that church.

You can persecute it, you can squash it, you can terrorize it, you can torture it, you can pursue it, you can drive it out, you can burn its books, you will never destroy this church. That's what Jesus told Peter. The Book of Mormon comes along and says, oh no, sorry, the whole thing just went to rack and ruin by 400 AD, and we haven't had a church for 1400 years until good old Joseph Smith decides to dig into the ground and find a place.

Well, if you should happen to end up being a Catholic and accosted by a pair of Mormons, there are two central issues that you can always bring up and they will have no answer just as these two pitiable young men had no answer. A, there is no explanation for there being well over 4000 documented errors and corrections in this inspired book that came from the golden plates under the ministry of the Spirit in a mesmerized state with the Urim and the Thummim translating. He somehow managed to quote Shakespeare, the plates themselves quote scripture that had not been written yet, and the man through whom God decided to deliver this revelation has no healing, no weather control, no glowing mountain with thunder and fire, no leprous hand, no water to blood, no staff across any river parting the sea, nothing.

How do we know that Joseph Smith is from God? Jesus said, you don't have to believe what I say, believe the works, for it is they which testify of me that the Father has sent me. That's the testimony of Jesus Christ. I'll tell you the other thing that really kind of burns him up is I said, this is exactly the same situation as Mohammed.

Mohammed showed up in 6 something AD claiming that he had a big divine revelation from

Allah and he didn't do any miracles either. He had no authentication from God or from Allah or from anybody else. He never healed anybody, never raised the dead, never predicted the future, never shone in blazing light on a transfiguration mountain, never stretched forth anybody's withered hand, never picked up a lame man and had him walk, never restored sight to the blind, didn't do any of those things.

The apostles healed lepers. Remember when just the shadow of Peter walking by would heal someone? A handkerchief that he had touched would heal someone? That's how powerful the authentication was that Jesus gave to his apostles. So much so that it sort of ricocheted to their first generation associates like Mark and Luke.

But even by the end of his career, after the apostle Paul had written his epistles, remember when he left Trophimus sick in Miletus? Why was his healing power gone? He's recognized as an apostle. The purpose for those miracles is no longer necessary. It was to authenticate.

Without authentication, even if it looks like an angel of light, it is not to be believed. If somebody shows up at the end of your bed and says great things, forget it. Visions, self-hypnosis, some guy with a mouth full of teeth on TV telling you stuff, don't believe it.

God will mark out his messenger. That's all you need to know about refuting the cult mongers. Well, it's time to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll pick up and take a look at the opposition to God's people in the days of Deborah and Barak.