

Bible Special 06-07-18b

Let's continue our study now. I want you to keep in mind the attitude that someone might have about our Christian faith as we look at something that seems to most of us to be fairly obviously erroneous. This is the way our Christian faith can look to other people.

We say, you know, the angel Moroni and the golden glasses and the golden tablets and people say, oh yeah, right, the Red Sea, the Ark of the Covenant, Jesus walking on water and that sort of thing. There are people who have the same view of Christianity that we might develop for this modern day sort of hoax. So I want to review just for a moment what is the essence of the Christian faith.

Now we've talked about what constitutes orthodox Christianity, but what is the essence of it? What's the difference in Moses going to the mountain and coming down with the Ten Commandments and Joseph Smith miraculously ending up with the golden glasses and transcribing the golden tablets in Egyptian hieroglyphics? What's the difference? Do you know the difference? Most people don't know the difference. A lot of people don't think there is any difference. What is the essential message that's in those orthodox points? What is the message? We've talked about the three points and you know those backwards and forwards, but what is the message that that conveys? What is the essential truth that's contained in it? It goes back to what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit and what he would convict the world of.

Everyone in their heart who reaches the point of consciousness of existence and God and so on recognizes when God the Holy Spirit comes and convicts that there is a God. All of us know that we came from the hand of a creator. We know this in our heart of hearts.

People will deny it. People will push it away. People will throw water on it and try to extinguish that little spark, but God the Holy Spirit puts that knowledge in the heart of every man.

We know that we have a creator God. It's inherent. It's built in.

It's like computers. A lot of the Pentium chips have a serial number. It's burned in.

And the Pentium chip, you can use a utility or you can go to a certain information screen in Windows and read the serial number of the chip. It's burned in. It's there.

It's just a part of the chip. You can't change it. You can't erase it.

It's there. And we have this knowledge that's built into the heart of every man. God has put eternity in our hearts.

Even Solomon talked about this in the Old Testament. And we recognize that we are somehow separate from that creator. And the question becomes, do I want connection to the creator God? Do I want relationship with God? Do I want a future with God? Do I want to be pleasing to the God who made me? Do I want to be approved in His sight or not? There are two kinds of

people in the world, and only two kinds.

Those who do want a relationship with God and those who don't. There are degrees of enthusiasm for one or the other. There are violently hateful, spiteful, lava-spitting atheists.

And there are very motivated, highly enthusiastic, and dedicated Christians. And in between, you have an entire spectrum. But there's only two kinds of people.

The saved and the lost. Those who want a relationship with God, will get the information, and can make a decision. So, now, what's the difference in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Genesis? Or the Gospel of John? What's the difference? First of all, don't forget, men who produced the inspired books of Scripture, at the time and at the place, were observed by eyewitnesses.

And there were clear signs of God's presence and God's approval and God's initiation. How many different miracles were performed at the hands of Moses? Do you think the Israelites had any trouble recognizing that what he brought down from the mountain was from God? When he had stretched out the rod and the Red Sea parted. When the plagues came on Egypt at Moses' word and left at Moses' word.

When at Moses' word, the quail flew in and fed them. When at Moses' word, plagues came and went. Victories were won and lost.

Remember the great battle in the valley? Joshua was out there fighting. And as long as they hold Moses' arms up, they prevail. And when Moses' arms get tired and they lower, they start to lose.

And so they get, who's on each side of Moses? Do you remember? Aaron and Hur. Aaron is on one side and Hur is on the other. And they hold Moses' arms up until the battle is won.

Well, this marks out Moses as God's man, doesn't it? The apostles. John, who wrote the gospel of John, was marked out as an apostle shortly after the day of Pentecost. When they're walking into the temple square.

And here's a man who needs healing. And he comes up and he's begging alms of Peter and John. And they say, you know, money we don't have to give you, but what we have we will give you.

And he's healed. And this is observed by hundreds of witnesses. Jesus himself, observed by thousands of witnesses.

The apostles, Peter, James, John, Paul, and so on. Innumerable eyewitnesses at the time. So that the books that they produced in the hearing and in the presence of these witnesses are accepted.

Because there's undeniable proof of God's hand and God's power. Plus, the message that is

contained in these books follows that message of orthodoxy. There is a God in heaven who has an absolute righteous requirement.

It can only be satisfied in Christ. Man is in a lost and hopeless condition and can do nothing to redeem himself. That message is consistent through all 66 books of the Bible.

It is not in the Gnostic writings. It is not in the spurious pseudepigrapha. It is not in the apocrypha.

And it is not in the writings of the Jehovah's Witnesses. It's not in the Watchtower publications. It's not in the Book of Mormon.

Instead, you have a lot of other stuff. This is what we have to look for. What are the signposts? What are the markers that God is in a thing or not in it? You have to make these kind of decisions all the time.

You might have the opportunity for a friendship. You might have the opportunity for a business relationship. You might have the opportunity to live in a community.

You might have the opportunity to pursue membership or availability in some particular sphere. And you have to look and say, is God in this or not? And you look for the marks of God's presence and of God's provision. And they're either there or they're not.

It's not that hard to see. But what happened with the Mormons? The farmer mortgaged his farm and published this bunch of stuff that this young man had written. It supposedly translated from places that no one ever saw.

So, what happened? By the time Joseph Smith turned 25 in 1830, he had organized a small group of followers into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And the following year, he got a special revelation from God that said, Leave New York. So, they moved to Ohio.

And the membership in his group swelled to 1,600 people. So, then they had to leave Ohio and move to the land of Zion. This is Zion, Missouri.

There's a town in Missouri called Zion and that's where they went. They claimed the town for the Lord. They said, this is God's town and they claimed it for the Lord.

That is, they claimed it for themselves. Well, this riled up all the townspeople and they drove them out. They got sticks and rakes and hoes and said, be gone.

So, by 1839, this group is in Illinois. Interestingly, some of our whole ancestors were also in Illinois in 1839. They were living in a community called, they weren't Mormons by the way, they were living in a community called Nauvoo, N-A-U-V-O-O, which is another one of these layman Nephi made up words.

Smith claimed it was Hebrew for beautiful place. Well, let me assure you, there is no Hebrew

word, Nauvoo, that means anything like beautiful place. This is on the Mississippi River and soon the local newspaper, the Nauvoo Expositor began to criticize the Mormons.

Now, the place was called Nauvoo before by the way. This was like an Indian word or something. But he said, oh, well, this is a great spot.

This is Hebrew and means beautiful place. But the Nauvoo newspaper began to publish editorials and things criticizing them because among other things, they believed in polygamy, multiple wives. So, the Mormons retaliated by going into town and destroying the newspaper office.

So, Smith got arrested for that, for vandalism and breaking and entering and destruction of private property. On June 27th of 1844, an angry mob stormed the jail. Smith was shot and that was the end of him.

Big period to the life of Joseph Smith. Well, there was another man in the group who took over. They had a big crowd there and they needed a leader.

So, a fellow named Brigham Young took over. When Joseph Smith got shot in jail for busting up the newspaper office, Brigham Young became the leader. So, he led them on a long, dangerous journey all the way across the plains.

And to cut a long, long story short, on July 24th of 1847, this is 13, 14 years before the Civil War, they ended up in Utah at the Great Salt Lake. And Young announced, this is the place. And that's, of course, where they've been pretty much ever since.

There are many millions of Mormons in the United States now. About seven out of eight Mormons live in the United States. It's largely an American phenomenon.

Their temple headquarters is in Salt Lake City, but they have a temple in Los Angeles. They have a major temple in Los Angeles. They have a major temple in Hawaii.

They have a major temple in Switzerland. And nine other places around the world. The temple is sacred to the Mormons.

That's the only place that they can do ceremonies of celestial marriage and baptism for the dead. And these practices, the celestial marriage and baptism for the dead, are real important. They have saving power.

They're not in the Book of Mormon, however, but they're in the subsequent writings that Joseph Smith put together. He has another book called Doctrines and Covenants, or D&C, as they like to call it. Once Joseph Smith had the idea down of getting a new revelation from God, more scripture, with the Book of Mormon, he wrote two books that kind of flesh out this new revelation.

One of them is the Doctrines and Covenants, and the other is the Pearl of Great Price. So these

three documents are the additional scriptures plus the additions to the Bible. I'm going to read you a little bit of what the Mormons believe, and then I'm going to read you some things from the Mormon website.

This is what Mormons believe. God was once a mortal man. He lived on a planet like our own.

He lived a life much like ours. He advanced step by step, got gradually better and better. God had a father himself, and then he has had a son, and Jesus is in the process of becoming God the Father for some other thing, and so on.

So God has a body of flesh and bones, just like you and me. God is basically an exalted man with eternal powers. He lives in an exalted marriage relationship.

God is married. We are the literal children of God. There is a marriage in heaven, and all of us are actually children from this marriage of this super man and his wife.

We used to live up there in heaven with God, our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Mother. We were spirit children, and God is continuing to get better and better. He didn't just get better and become God and then stop.

He is continuing to improve and learn and get better than he was. So we were up there. We were spirit children.

We were living with God, our Heavenly Father, and there was a council called of all of the leading spirits in the spirit world up there. And God, our particular God, there are lots of other spirit gods for other planets and other populations, but our particular God proposed a plan. He said, look, I've got a way.

I'm going to teach my spirit children a bunch of things to help them. Help them become like me. So he said, what we'll do is we'll set up an earth.

We'll send our spirit children down and give them physical bodies. They'll learn good from evil and have free will to choose. And everybody can choose whether they want to come back up and live with me again or not.

That's how the story goes. Well, Lucifer is our older brother. He's also a child of God and the Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother, but he's an older.

He's been around longer. So he had his own plan. So he stood up and he said, look, I've got a plan for my little siblings here.

And so Lucifer had the idea, let's send them down there, but take away their free will and make everybody obey the rules. Make them obey the law. And they can worship me.

I'll be their God. I'll be their older brother. And they can worship me and obey the laws and we'll take away their free will.

Well, Jesus stood up. He's another brother. So Lucifer and Jesus are brothers.

We're all brothers. We're all spirit children. So Jesus stood up and offered himself as our sin offering and said, no, let man have free will.

Let him have the chance to come up and have eternal glory again. And so everybody in the council said boo on Lucifer's plan and yes to the Jesus plan. So Lucifer was really mad.

And so he persuaded one third of the rest of the spirit children to follow him and rebel against God and the plan of Jesus. And so they were cast away from God's presence and sent to this earth without any bodies of flesh and blood. They're spirit children, but they don't have bodies.

So there's a war now in heaven. There was a war up there and now he's continuing to battle. And in the battle that took place in heaven when we were all spirit children and Lucifer rebelled and there was this big spirit battle.

Some people were very brave and valiant and others were kind of cowardly and ran away. And you know, the red badge of courage and all that, you know, they ran away. And so the people who ran away down here in this life became the Negroes.

Now remember the time and the place when this cult came into existence and what was going on in the United States. What was happening in the 1830s and the 1840s? Slavery, abolition, the blacks, the slaves were a big issue. And so this was an idea that got woven into the fabric of this cult.

So these who were kind of cowardly and weak and useless in the battle in heaven had the dark skin. So the darker the skin, the darker your eyes, the darker your hair, the less valiant you were. If you're down here and you've got green or blue eyes and blonde hair, you are a wonderful, courageous, valiant warrior in the heavenly battle.

If you're dark skinned like an Indian or a Negro, you've got brown hair and brown eyes like a lot of us who have Indian blood. Well, you were a pusillanimous, pukey little do-nothing in the battle. Now all the blue-eyed people were feeling good about themselves.

But remember now, this is a common thread in satanically inspired cultish activity. What did the Aryan superiority people believe? What did Hitler promote in the Hitler youth and the Aryan race and all that kind of thing? Blonde hair, blue eyes, it's the same kind of thing, but it was woven in way back in the 1800s. So the earth was created, populated by people.

Man would learn and grow down here. God told Abraham that there's a big control center for the earth in a place called Kolob, K-O-L-O-B. This guy should have been a writer for Star Trek.

So Adam is the father of our spirits. Brigham Young said Adam was the father of our spirits, but then he realized he'd screwed up because God is supposed to be the father of our spirits and we can't be descended from our brother Adam and our heavenly father. So then they tried to

retract it, but it's documented in the Mormon church records that Brigham Young said that Adam is the father of spirits.

So they've got a big contradiction problem there. So Adam and Eve, when they sinned and got cast out of the garden, they found out that sin was necessary so that they could live, and it was actually sort of a good thing. So Adam got baptized and received the Holy Ghost and became a priest and became the first patriarch.

So God is immortal. Christ is his actual, literal son. There's nothing... They do believe that Jesus is God's son, but they believe that all of us are God's sons.

Jesus is just the older brother. So what we are striving for as God's children in this earth is to grow up to be like him. And I mean just like him.

Not like him in character and in essence the way the Bible teaches, but like him in the sense that we should be gods with our own universe and planets where we can put our spirit children and do the same thing that God does. It's just kind of a cyclical Hindu, sort of a Buddhist reincarnation kind of a thing. God used to be a man and now he's a god.

He's got all of us people down here. We're going to all grow up and be gods. It's an infinite universe, lots of planets, and we're just going to repeat the same thing over and over.

So we have to learn how to be gods ourselves. Just as all gods before us have done. This is a quote from Joseph Smith.

This is a quote of Jesus in the book called History of the Church. Jesus said, My father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same. And when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory.

He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place. And thereby become exalted myself. And eventually we would go up and take Jesus' place, and on and on.

Well, they believe in baptism for the dead. They believe in degrees of celestial glory. There are three different degrees.

Celestial glory is the highest. Joseph Smith's wife, by the way, Emma, was not too crazy about the bigamy part of the religion. They don't talk about that much, but she was not a fan of that part.

So that's some of what goes on. The idea in these two migrations to America and so on we've already talked about. Now I'm going to read you some things from Mormon.org. This is one of a family of websites of the Latter Day Saints.

They've got some for genealogy. They've got a lot of different websites with different purposes. Some are sort of for their own people.

Others are kind of for public consumption. Mormon.org is welcome to our church. Let us explain who we are.

So when you go to Mormon.org, the first thing that you see is a nice little home page. And it says, welcome. This site is for anyone interested in learning more about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

We invite you to view information about the church, families, the nature of God, the purpose of life, frequently asked questions. So you go in and you say, well, tell me about the nature of God. Nature of God.

Most people believe in a supreme being, even though they may call him by different names. We know that God, our Heavenly Father, lives. He knows you and each of us and loves all his children.

We are commanded to love God. Matthew 22, 36 through 38. Jesus Christ taught that we must know the one true God to have eternal life.

John 17, 3. As his children, we must know who he is and what he is like. Would anybody argue with that? Would any Christian argue with those statements? God lives. He loves us as his children.

We are commanded to love God. Christ taught that we must know God to have eternal life. We must know who he is and what he is like.

As you come to know and love God, you will find greater peace and joy, both in this life and in the life to come. And that's what it says about the nature of God. Now, there are some sub-things that you can burrow down deeper.

They have God, our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost. So you click on God, our Heavenly Father. Jesus taught that God is our Father which art in heaven.

We call God Heavenly Father because he is the Father of our spirits. As your Father, God knows and loves you personally. He wants you to find joy in this life.

Return to live with him when life is over. He's prepared a plan to help you do these things. It is the plan of salvation, a plan of happiness.

All of this sounds very orthodox, doesn't it? It sounds very good. But if you click on he is the Father of our spirits, that's a link. This takes you to, does God know who I am? Of course he does.

God is your Heavenly Father. Like any good and loving Father, he knows and loves each of his children. Even though you have forgotten it, now we finally get the unique Mormon thing.

Four clicks down. Even though you have forgotten it, you lived with Heavenly Father as a spirit

before you were born. But he remembers, he knows who you are.

He knows your name. He knows your hopes, your successes and failures, your challenges, sorrows and joys. Because God knows you so well, he has chosen the time and place for you to be born.

And has invited you to feel after him and find him. For he is not far from every one of us. Acts 17, 26 and 27.

Learn more. Does God care about me? And so on. They take you a little bit of Mormon doctrine and take you right back into the mainstream.

Jesus Christ. What does it say about Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God. He is Heavenly Father's only begotten Son in the flesh.

He is our Redeemer. Through Jesus Christ, Heavenly Father has provided a way for all people to become like him and return to live with him forever. Do you see the disguise of the angel of light that thinly wraps Mormonism? What is the problem with this cult? They do acknowledge that Jesus is God's Son, sort of.

But they raise us to the level of the Son of God before we are even saved, don't they? Everybody on the planet is a Son of God. We are all children of God. Everything is beautiful in its own way.

The world is going to find a way. Right? He is not heavy. He is my brother.

Brotherhood of man. Except the Negroes. They were the unfavorable ones.

Of course, they really toned that down. Up until fairly recently, you couldn't be black and join that church. Up until the 60s.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the Creator, Savior. He will be our Judge under the direction of Heavenly Father who created the earth.

Jesus lived on earth. He led a perfect life and taught by word and example. Through his suffering and giving his life on the cross.

By performing atonement, he saves us from our sins. Through resurrection, Jesus Christ saves us from death. All of that is true.

Can you be a Mormon and be saved? If you believe in the Son, you have life. And they believe in the atoning work of Christ. Everything surrounding that is a blurry, mangled, tangled mess.

And there is the curse at the end of the book of Revelation. For he that adds to the words of this book. Or takes away from the words of this book.

And you can be in deep trouble for trying to add to scripture. Or trying to take away from it. But, it is possible to be a latter day saint.

And if this is all you know. If you looked at their website and said, well sure, I believe that. They can be saved.

You are not going to get very far if you think the purpose of this life is to become God. What was Satan's problem in eternity past? I will be like the Most High. I will raise my throne above the stars of God.

This is the satanic five I wills reborn. Generally speaking, there is great danger in the Mormon system of doctrine. Because it promotes hedonism through polygamy.

It promotes relativism. Because it is tolerant of a lot of things that are unscriptural. Because you've got other scriptures.

And they conflict. It is sectarian in the sense that it views certain ones as being favored. And others as not being favored.

But here is the biggest problem. God's word is complete. It is sufficient.

It is authenticated. And the witness of God the Holy Spirit in our souls. When we look at the word of God.

When we study it and meditate on it. And it's truth penetrates and changes us. There is no counterfeit.

There is no substitute for that. Academic learning won't do it. Made up King James English in the Book of Mormon won't do it.

Or the doctrines and covenants won't do it. It is only the living and powerful word of God. And there is no logical proof that can conclusively dismiss anything.

Or conclusively prove Christianity. Each of us as an individual makes a decision in his own heart before God. With the witness of the Spirit and the presence of the word of God.

That's what we have done. And it will give us. John says you will know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

And hopefully you can sense and see some of the deep egregious problems with these cults that we've looked at. We've got to stop for tonight. We'll pick up next week with our cult study.

Let's close in prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit that leads us into all truth.

We know that if we ask and seek and knock, you will reveal that truth to us. We pray that we can be ready students of it. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.