

DO WE NEED A PROPHET TO HEAD THE CHURCH?

June 14, 2008



My previous newsletter on the Mormon Temple is now in the archives, which you can read any time. I told a friend that anyone who actually took the time to plow through any of my lengthy newsletters deserved a gold star on their forehead. Unfortunately, I'm one of those people who feel they have to exhaust the whole subject—that is, give you the whole load of hay--and I think many of you would be just as satisfied with something shorter. So . . . from now on, that's my plan. So, what to write about this time?

It came to my attention recently that the LDS Church's late President, Gordon B. Hinckley, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for the church's efforts in "disaster relief and education funding across the globe." While this is admittedly a worthwhile endeavor, I suspect a public relations agenda behind it. But that's another story. For this newsletter, I'd like to answer the question: Does God still require a prophet to lead his church?

Mormon missionaries claim that the sign of God's true church is having a head prophet to lead it, along with twelve apostles. They say that sign alone proves that God started the Mormon Church because that is what they have. They quote Amos 3:7. (*Amos was an Old Testament prophet who lived in the 8th century BC*):

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. (KJV)

Mormon missionaries insist that the Old Testament, especially the passage in Amos, proves that this was God's all-time pattern, and that He would continue to call prophets at the head of His church—even into this day and age. Joseph Smith was the LDS Church's first named prophet, and every President of the church thereafter functioned under this title--always with twelve apostles. The late President Hinkley was acknowledged as such; so is the present President, Thomas S. Monson. This is supposed to prove that it is God's only true church.

Yes, during Old Testament times, raising up prophets was God's pattern. It was also his pattern to have temples and blood rituals of sacrificial lambs, etc., so the people could have their sins forgiven from year to year. But, the purpose of all that ritual was to point to Christ, the sacrificial lamb, who paid the ultimate price on the cross for all sin for all times. In view of that, the old law of sacrifice was done away with, along with temple ordinances. To continue with temple ritual would be like saying that Jesus' sacrifice didn't count for anything. Neither were there any more prophets called, because with Jesus now God's chief prophet on earth, no more would be needed.

The scriptures state this clearly:

For all the prophets and the law prophesied UNTIL John. (Matt 11:13)

The Law and the prophets were UNTIL John. (Luke 16:16)

John the Baptist marked the END of the Old Testament era because the mission of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest and King was on the verge of being fulfilled.

Where in the New Testament Church do the scriptures say that after Jesus death and resurrection, the church chose a head prophet to take His place? Where does it say that after all the twelve apostles died off, the church appointed new apostles? They simply didn't. Why? Because Eph. 2:20 states that Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of the household of God.

He will continue in that role forever.

You would think that if Jesus thought a head prophet was necessary after he died, he would have instructed his apostles to appoint a new one afterwards. But, he didn't.

Hebrews 1 and 2, written AFTER Christ rose from the dead and AFTER the church was in full operation, states very clearly that God ended the pattern of prophets and would now speak only to us through His son:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophet, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.

There is no scripture that states a particular prophet was to begin acting as head prophet of the New Testament church after Jesus died.

But the Mormon missionaries interpret Hebrews 1 and 2 differently. Their argument is that Christians interpret it wrong. They say the scripture is saying that when God spoke in times past by the prophets and in the last days spoke by the Son, it only meant that during Jesus' lifetime, he spoke the words of God JUST LIKE the prophets of old; so, it didn't necessarily mean the role of prophet was done away with.

To explain why the Christian interpretation of this passage is different from theirs, Missionaries will add that when a passage isn't clear—especially when it has a Christian interpretation--it's usually because it wasn't translated correctly. They will then quote their Article of Faith that declares that they believe in the Bible only in so far as it's translated correctly. This, of course, gives them the freedom to put a Mormon interpretation on a scripture so as to keep it in line with what they believe.

Missionaries will insist that to prove that their interpretation of Hebrew 1 and 2 is indeed correct. They quote Ephesians 2:20. Referring to the Household of God, it says:

and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone;

If they should ever say that to you, listen closely to how they misquote that passage.

There is one word they leave out that clarifies the meaning of the passage and shows that their interpretation is wrong (*or if they do include the word, it's glossed over*). Ephesians 2:20 does not say that the church will be built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. Rather, it says, upon the foundation of THE apostles and prophets. That small word makes all the difference in the world!

The word infers specific apostles and prophets—meaning those before Christ. The scripture is saying that the household of God would be built upon the foundation of the words and writings of THE apostles and prophets--those who had testified of Christ's coming. They are the ones God chose to speak through, in order to prepare the people for Christ. After John the Baptist, there was no need of specifically called prophets, because Jesus became the church's head prophet. After He died, the church was to continue founding their faith upon the inspired words of the prophets of old, the New Testament twelve apostles who testified of Him, and the Words of Jesus.

Today, God calls pastors to head His churches instead. Endowed with the Holy Spirit, they receive inspiration to lead their individual flock, guided by the revealed word of God, the Bible.

Now, aside from the subject of apostles and prophets, here's another interesting historical occurrence that proves the LDS church couldn't be God's true church.

The Mormon church claims that after the death of the last apostle there was no church on earth recognized by God until He restored it through Joseph Smith in 1830.

Not so. God was moving down through history, beginning with Martin Luther and through all the succeeding great awakenings. But, I'd like to call your attention to in the latter part of the Second Great Awakening, which occurred in 1858. In a minute, you'll see what I'm getting at.

God swept his Holy Spirit across the nation bringing about a stupendous revival. It spread across the United States, then abroad to the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, South India, and then to Europe, Ireland, England and the rest of the world. Prayer meetings broke out everywhere, bringing two million souls to Christ. Churches were obliged to stay open day and night because of the multitudes of converts. *(This is such a stupendous story, that I plan on covering it in a future newsletter.)* In all those conversions, there was no new theology, only New Testament teachings. That was enough to bring them to their knees.

Now, here is the significance to the 1858 revival. It took place twenty-eight years AFTER the Mormon Church was already in existence. The Holy Spirit did NOT move over two million people to lead them to the Mormon Church. Instead, he led them into protestant churches! If Mormonism was God's only true church, wouldn't you think that He would have caused a mass exodus to Utah?

But, no--they were not led to embrace the Mormon Church. Nor were they led to accept teachings that taught that the Bible was not enough, or that His church needed to be restored. Nor were they given a new revelation saying that to be saved one must receive temple ordinances, memorize passwords to get into heaven, do work for the dead, prepare for polygamy in heaven, or that the grace of God has no power to save believers in heaven.

Now, I have heard missionaries suggest that the Great Awakening was Satan's plan to lead people away from the fullness of the Mormon gospel. I say, what? You mean Satan would bring over two million souls to God just to do that? I don't think so.

My next newsletter will cover the important Mormon claim--that God had absolutely no church in existence during the dark ages, the period that the LDS Church refers to as the Great Apostasy, and so this necessitated a restoration through Joseph Smith. Every single teaching, practice and temple ritual, including the Book of Mormon, sinks or swims upon it.

This subject will, of necessity, include the church during the dark ages, and the First and Second Awakening.

Until next time . . .
Janis

END

© Copyright 2008-2010. This story cannot be copied and used in a professional publication without express permission of the author