

THE PETER TESTIMONY©
Have Mormons received the Peter Testimony?
Have you?
October 5, 2009



Before I move into the main thrust of this article, I'd like to announce a new link on my website, *Faith Promoting Stories*. (See left-hand column near the bottom) Some of these stories will not necessarily be about Mormonism--although they may mention it as a backdrop--but, rather, the Christian experience, demonstrating how God is always there in time of need. There will also be short stories, maybe even a humorous one.

Remember if you would like to be notified every time I post a new article (once every three months); send me your email address by clicking on the "contact" link. For those who appreciate not receiving any more emails than necessary, rest assured this single announcement will be the only email you will receive from me. Also, if you have a question or concern you would like me to cover in future articles, please send it to me.

Below are my current recommendations:

Recommended:

Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Quick Christian Guide to the Mormon Holy Book by former Mormon, Ross Anderson (Zondervan 2009)

This is an excellent overview for those who prefer quick, but informative coverage of not only the Book of Mormon, but also the Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price and Joseph Smith's inspired version of the Bible. Especially commendable is Ross's nonjudgmental and respectful presentation of the doctrinal differences between the Bible and Book of Mormon. Also, his section entitled, "Are Mormons Christian?" and "How Christians Can Talk With Mormons" call attention to the fact that when Christians approach a religious culture that is different than their own, it is imperative that, aside from knowledge of their doctrines, they comprehend the mindset of the members. Without this information, most evangelistic endeavors by Christians will fail. Ross does an excellent job in conveying this information.

A Way Which Seemeth Right: My experience in Mormonism by David A. McCament, formerly LDS. <http://www.utlm.org/testimony/davemctestimony.htm>.

I highly recommend this former Mormon's detailed account. As a faithful LDS member, he believed with all his heart that the LDS Church was true. After thirteen years he finally came to grips with the inconsistencies between Mormonism and the Bible, and shares his personal struggles of how he came to trust in the Biblical Jesus Christ alone for his salvation instead of using feelings to determine the truth.

Now, to *The Peter Testimony*, which will cover the following:

1. My experience of receiving the Peter Testimony (revelation knowledge about Christ).
2. The Biblical explanation of the Peter Testimony
3. What are other ways of receiving the Peter Testimony?
4. Should Mormons receive the Peter testimony?
5. Does God bless Mormons with not only a Peter Testimony but also other genuine experiences?
6. Why did God give me my Peter Testimony while still a Mormon?

7. Before I exited the Mormon Church, what did my Peter Testimony do for me?
8. What is the "Burning Bosom" phenomenon?
9. What does the Burning Bosom phenomenon actually feel like?
10. The test for truth.
11. What is the difference between the Burning Bosom and the Peter Testimony?
12. Is there a concern about Mormons receiving a Peter Testimony of Christ today (versus years ago)?
13. Have you received a Biblically based Peter Testimony?

First, before I describe how I received the Peter Testimony, let me say up front, that there are other ways that God can give this. Mine was rather dramatic, but I think God chose to do it that way because he wanted to be sure he got my attention. (He did!) Further in the article, I list other ways one might receive the same revelation knowledge. So, don't assume that you need to have some far out dramatic kind of John-the-Revelator experience.

My experience of receiving the Peter Testimony (revelation knowledge about Christ).

Born and raised in the Methodist church, my mother had my sister and I join the Mormon Church when I was 14. This was because of its excellent youth program. By age 19 I was thoroughly converted to its theology.

Active in the organizations, I married a returned missionary and had three children before he died of Spinal Meningitis at age 29. At the time, I was living in Wendover, a small desert town on the edge of the Utah salt flats. Back in the sixties, the only time the Bible was ever read in the ward (other than to pull passages out of context to prove Mormon doctrine) was at Christmas and Easter.

It was during a special Christmas program in Sunday school that God gave the Peter Testimony to me. And take my word, I shall never forget it! Certainly, God knew that since I was such a dedicated, true-blue, through-and-through Latter-day Saint that it would take something dramatic to get my attention. He would use it to launch my journey out of Mormonism.

When I arrived at Sunday school that morning, I sat on the front row. The Bishop surprised me by rushing up with an open Bible. Shoving it into my hands, he said, *"One of the readers didn't show up. When I give you the signal, come up and read this passage."* I agreed, and put my finger on the place without reading it ahead of time. Knowing that most ward members had a difficult time reading King James English, I assumed a smug smile. *"I'll show everyone how well I can read."* Little did I know that my cockiness would soon be knocked out of me.

Fifteen minutes into the program, the Bishop nodded to me and I went up to the pulpit and started to read. To this day, I don't know which passage it was, but since it was Christmas it obviously had something to do with Jesus' birth and his being the Son of God. I, of course, already believed this. But, as I was soon to find out, I didn't have an absolute convicting knowledge of it--after all, how can one actually *prove* something like that?

I had only read a couple of verses (quite well, I thought) when, without warning, my voice box was suddenly cut off and I was unable to speak. A powerful "something" came down from above, which I can only describe as a flood of heavenly power (the congregation probably thought I was hesitating over some King James word.) It started at the top of my head and poured down through my body like nothing I can describe. It flowed into my chest, my stomach, both arms, hands, down my torso and through my legs and feet. And as it swept through me, an audible voice penetrated the very core of my being: *"Yes, Jesus is the Christ!"* Then, it was over.

Stunned, my voice was given back to me and I managed to finish reading the passage. I walked off the stage, took my seat, and then left when Sunday school was over.

At home, still moved by the event, I pondered its dynamic effect, realizing that I now knew in a way that I had never known before, that Jesus was indeed the Christ. God had poured *revelation knowledge* into me. Prior to the experience I only had an intellectual belief in Jesus that I thought was genuine--after all, hadn't I been raised to believe in the baby Jesus' birth, his crucifixion and resurrection? But, there was a significant difference between what I received that morning and my previously held belief. Rapt in thought, I wondered why God thought this so important. Then, the Holy Ghost immediately rushed Matthew 16:13-18 into my mind and a light bulb went off. "*Aha!*"

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Who are the people saying I am?"

Well, they replied, "some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

Then he asked them, "Who do you think I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "The Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

"God has blessed you, Simon, son of Jonah," Jesus said, "for My Father in heaven has personally revealed this to you--this is not from any human source. You are Peter, a stone; and upon this rock I will build my church; and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it." (LNT)

The Biblical explanation of the Peter Testimony.

The scriptures don't share with us how or exactly when the Holy Ghost gave this special testimony to Peter, but Jesus was pleased because he knew he hadn't received it based on what others (flesh and blood) said--but what had been revealed to him from heaven. And it is understandable that Jesus would ask his disciples who they thought he was, considering that at that time they were in an area where the worship of Baal and other false gods was prevalent. The false gods were dead gods and Peter testified that unlike them, Jesus was the son of the Father, a *living* God.

But, there was more significance to Jesus' satisfaction with Peter's answer--something the LDS Church fails to see every time they quote this scripture.

Jesus knew that the receipt of this kind of revelation knowledge from heaven would be required of all future Christians who would make up his church. They, too, must receive the same revelation knowledge from the Holy Ghost and have a correct testimony of his person and mission as described in the Bible. Since this is basic to salvation, believers would have to absolutely know this, not via flesh and blood, or hearing others say he is the Christ; nor by logic, intellect, or blind acceptance of some church's written doctrinal statement, but from their own personal, Holy Ghost testimony received from heaven. These confessions of faith were to be the bedrock of the church. Without it, the church would have no strength.

Because of Peter's solid-like-a-stone, Holy Ghost testimony, Jesus changed his name from Simon to Peter (*petros*), which is Greek for a small stone. After Jesus tells him he's blessed to have received this kind of revelation from heaven, in the very *same* breath Jesus continues. "You are Peter, a stone; and upon this rock (*petra*), which is Greek for a solid, immovable bedrock, "I will BUILD my church. While Jesus himself is known as the Rock, the bedrock foundation for building His church would be the rock of revelation about Christ that would be given to all believers.

Peter was metaphorically called a "stone," because of his solid testimony of revelation knowledge. And he wouldn't be the only one. He later tells believers in I Pet. 2:4-5, that God will build his church based on the strength of their Holy Ghost testimonies. They, like himself, were to be "living stones" for God's use in building his church.

The church is not an institution, but "called out believers" (ecclesia). This is where Mormons err in their understanding of this passage. While they rightly say the true church will be built on revelation, they believe it is revelation given to their institution (LDS Church) and only to their prophet, the President of the Church. But, the strength of Christ's church is revelation knowledge to individual believers, not to an institution or a single prophet.

Now, the LDS Church claims that members have Holy Ghost testimonies, but their programmed and memorized testimonies include unbiblical doctrines and beliefs. This is not what the Holy Ghost gives. His main function is to testify only to the truth about Jesus and His work as described in the Bible. While He also functions in another aspect, that of endowing a believer with one of the supernatural gifts after one receives the Baptism of the Holy Ghost mentioned in I Cor. 12:8-10, that is a subject for another article.

What are other ways of receiving the Peter Testimony?

There are different ways in which the Holy Ghost may give this testimony: (1) by a dream, vision, voice, or the way I received it, (2) meditating upon the scriptures, during which time Christ will be unveiled to you in a powerful way, (3) an inner, audible voice, (4) the impression of words being spoken in your mind and heart, (5) or at the moment of your salvation experience when you first accept the Biblical Jesus and his work and ask Him to come into your heart and be Lord of your life. The most common experience is numbers 2 and 5.

Which way you will receive this testimony will be according to the grace of God and how and when he decides to relay it to you; also your sincerity and spiritual receptivity. At that moment, the Holy Ghost will cause a divine quickening in your spirit with revelation knowledge about Jesus. And the testimony the Holy Ghost gives will always agree with what the Bible teaches about Christ and his work--not the additional things the Mormon Church teaches about him, such as God and Jesus appearing to Joseph Smith, telling him that Christianity was corrupted, the Bible is unreliable, and sending an angel with a drawn sword threatening Joseph Smith if he didn't practice polygamy.

When the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus and his work to believers, as he did to Peter, it will come in such a convincing manner that recipients will know it is not of themselves. It is the kind of testimony that flesh and blood cannot reveal. It will border on the supernatural because, after all, it is from the Holy Ghost.

Should Mormons receive the Peter testimony?

Some have, and it is imperative that they receive this testimony because God wants to bring them to the truth. This will fully be accomplished if the recipients understand what they've received, accept it for what it is, allow themselves be led to the truth of Biblical Christianity; and further, not assume that the Peter Testimony automatically incorporates Mormon doctrines into the witness they've received. (*Examples later*) Mormons claim a Holy Ghost testimony, but it extends outside the range of the Holy Ghost's mission and includes far more than Jesus ever taught.

Unfortunately, there are Mormons who are not spiritually receptive to this Holy Ghost testimony because they erroneously believe they have already received it. This, because they stand up in their monthly testimony meeting and verbalize the church's memorized testimony. They include in that testimony that they know Jesus is the Christ; but it is something they've been trained to say, as follows:

I know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; that Jesus is the Christ; President Thomas S. Monson is a prophet, seer and revelator; and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church upon the face of the earth. And I say these things in the name

of Jesus Christ, Amen. (A Mormon's testimony is often longer, but it must at least contain these basics.)

But, a legitimate Peter Testimony is not meant to convey anything that contradicts the Bible, such as a testimony about Joseph Smith who taught the Gnostic doctrines of vicarious work for the dead, who insisted that God required plural marriage, secret passwords and death penalties to get into heaven, and who was married to women who, at the time, were still married to their lawful husbands. He was also involved in the occult. (See *my article, "Joseph Smith's Involvement with Magic, Masonry and the Occult."*) The Holy Ghost's only job is to testify to the person and work of the Biblical Jesus Christ.

The following is how Mormons learn their special testimony; also, how converts gain theirs. (This is not to say that some Mormons have not received a genuine Peter testimony, which will be covered later.)

Mormons who are born and raised in the church are taught from toddlerhood to memorize the testimony given above. Church leaders encourage this, knowing that the verbalization of one's faith tends to give more meaning and appearance of truth to beliefs, even if done by memorization. So, as children grow up, they continue to rattle it off as a conditioned response, which at the same time acts as an incentive for acceptance and approval. If missionaries going into the field feel they don't have one yet, they are urged, as Boyd K. Packer admonished (*who later became President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles*), to keep stating a testimony until they get one. (4) In other words, keep saying it over and over again until the repetition produces an inner conviction that it really is true and it's so deeply embedded in your gut that you finally believe it.

When the Mormon's inner conviction finally materializes through this process, it often translates into an emotional experience--more so if they are active in the church. Members are told that their emotion is the Holy Ghost confirming their beliefs. Further evidence is if tears are actually shed. But the reiterating of words, plus tears, is deceptive and doesn't endow one with a genuine testimony of revelation knowledge from the Holy Ghost.

How do converts gain their testimony of Mormonism?

Converts to the church are told that they are to gain a testimony of the church. Of course, converts want to comply--especially when they see other members bearing theirs in meetings. After all, they want to be acceptable and like everyone else. So, motivated by this, they pressure themselves until they soon believe they have received a testimony to Mormonism's truthfulness. But, what tells them this?

What influences converts is that they have already acquired an attraction and love for the contents of the Book of Mormon. (*They are not instructed to pray for a Peter Testimony about Christ, just the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith.*) This is because Joseph Smith incorporated so much from the Bible into it. (See *endnote 1 for more detail.*) Plus, they love all the outstanding claims of the LDS Church--and indeed, they are outstanding. What other church can boast visitations from God, Jesus, angels, Peter, James and John, Elijah and John the Baptist? Then, there is the thrill, especially in today's world, of believing God has called living prophets to head the church. Their proof of a testimony from the Holy Ghost, so they are told by the missionaries, may be a tingling in the spine or a warm feeling in their chest--the Burning Bosom phenomenon (*covered later*). Therefore, their feelings of love for the contents of the Book of Mormon, the outstanding claims of the Mormon Church and their feelings (*Burning Bosom or spine tingling*), convinces them.

Interestingly, you will find that Christians who receive a true Biblical Peter Testimony do not necessarily experience emotion, warm chest or spine tingles while they are receiving it--even with those who may have been caught up in a heavenly vision. Afterwards, however, they may

be elated to have received it and will then be filled with joyful emotion over God's love and the fact that they received it. But, emotions are not the test of truth or proof of a witness from the Holy Ghost. To test the truth of whatever you are praying about, it must agree with the Bible, lock, stock and barrel. Mormons are taught that *all* you need is the Burning Bosom witness. Everything hinges on that.

Does God bless Mormons with not only a Peter Testimony, but also other genuine experiences?

There may be Mormons who have received a valid Peter Testimony, even heavenly experiences, but who, by their own free will, choose to stay in the Mormon Church and fail to follow through on what God wants to achieve in their lives. The following is one example--an LDS man who prayed to know if his sins had truly been forgiven. He received what I believe to be a valid vision. (12)

This man, after anguishing prayer, was given a vision where he witnessed Jesus' agony in Gethsemane. There, in the garden, he stood behind a bush and watched it all, at the same time suffering immensely as he realized how much his own sins had made Jesus suffer. When the vision closed, he still remained in a state of sobbing and pleading to know if he was forgiven. Finally, the voice of the Lord spoke to him, telling him that his sins were forgiven.

Why did God choose to give the Mormon man this Gethsemane vision? Because He saw one of his children genuinely pleading for forgiveness and wanted to show him what he went through and that he indeed died for his sins.

Some may feel that the Lord should have reacted differently by saying something like: "*Sorry, I can't respond—you belong to the Mormon Church.*" When one of God's children cries to him he is not going to give them a stone or a serpent, despite the denomination they may be in. (See Luke 11:11). And while we'd like to think that God loves only "us," in reality he also loves "them." It is his nature.

This was, no doubt, a wonderful experience for him. It certainly had to put a conviction in his heart that Jesus died for his sins. Yet, at the same time, he was influenced by Mormon doctrine and didn't fully comprehend the atonement well enough to know that he didn't actually have to *wonder* and keep asking whether his sins were forgiven.

It is doubtful that this man ever came out of the church because of the testimony he gave about it afterwards (*see below*). While he, like many other Mormons love Christ and may even have had special experiences similar to the Gethsemane vision, here's the problem why so many stay in the church after receiving them. It's because they jump to the wrong conclusion. They mistakenly lump the truth of their experience with their other beliefs. I call it the all-or-nothing logic. Here's how a Mormon's mind can often work after receiving a Peter Testimony or some other revelatory experience:

I received this special testimony about Jesus being the Christ (or whatever the heavenly vision relays), therefore, because I received it as a Mormon, it was also God's way of saying that Joseph Smith is a prophet, LDS doctrines and temple rituals are true, and this is the only true church that He recognizes, etc.

Similarly, the man who received the Gethsemane experience testified afterwards that he knew with a perfect knowledge that all men must be born again and sanctified...which is true. But, he also latched on to the all-or-nothing logic, by adding exaltation (*meaning, godhood*) into his testimony. He said:

I now know with a perfect knowledge that all men must be born again, or sanctified of the spirit in order to receive their salvation *and obtain their exaltation*.

Jesus said nothing, either in the Gethsemane vision or in his words of forgiveness about exaltation and becoming a god. In addition, the man further tacked on to his testimony that because of what he received, he also knows the LDS Church is the only true church on the face of the earth, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, the Bible is the word of God (*although error-filled*), that the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price are all God's word, and that those in the Mormon Church who are devoted to Christ as he now is, are endowed with special keys of power through LDS temple ordinances.

Jesus didn't say or show to him anything about the LDS Church, its scriptures or temple ordinances. But, the man assumed that because he was favored to receive this Gethsemane vision as a *Mormon*, that it also meant Jesus was acknowledging that his church and all its beliefs were also true. But, upon examination, this is not what the vision or the voice of the Savior conveyed to him. Jesus did not say, "*My son, not only are your sins forgiven, but you are blessed for your faithfulness in temple work and striving for exaltation so you can become a god, and for belonging to the only true church upon the face of the earth restored by my prophet, Joseph Smith.*"

A similar incident occurred when a Seventy (male priesthood position) sat in my front room and shared with me his experience of feeling the Savior's loving arms around him during Sacrament meeting. "Therefore," he concluded in all soberness, "the Mormon Church is the only true church."

I politely told him that his experience was no doubt genuine because he loves the Savior and the Savior loves him. But, just because he was a Mormon sitting in an LDS Ward chapel when he received Jesus' expression of love, did not automatically mean that the experience was confirming the Mormon Church. If this were so, members of other churches who receive similar experiences of God's love--Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Hare Krishnas or Moonies--could rightly assume that their church is the only one God approves of. Obviously, this isn't so. All that was relayed to this man was that Jesus loved him.

God has compassion for all individuals who love Him, albeit they may be blindly entrenched in a church organization that teaches erroneous doctrines. Loving them anyway, he hopes to move them toward the full truth, as he did with me. But many Mormons, still blinded by the all-or-nothing logic, choose to remain in the church.

I would venture to say that members who have received a genuine testimony and witness about the Biblical Jesus or some aspect of his work, but stay in the LDS Church because of the all-or-nothing logic, will find that Satan may take advantage by giving them additional revelations that will verify Mormon doctrines. It wouldn't take much for these individuals, already feeling favored with a valid manifestation, to believe any future revelation and be unaware of its source. Satan tried to do this to me, but I was able to recognize the experience for what it was. I may, at some point, share this under my Faith Promoting Stories link.

The one difference between the testimony I received and the LDS man's experience of witnessing Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, is that after receiving my Peter Testimony I gained an even stronger testimony afterwards, because it led me to read the Bible with *enlightened* eyes. I did not tack on, or make any assumptions, that because I was a Mormon, standing in a ward chapel that Sunday morning on Christmas, that it also meant that the LDS Church was the only true church on the face of the earth, or that Joseph Smith was a prophet, or that exalted salvation can only be achieved through temple ordinances and Joseph Smith's certification as Brigham Young and others taught. (14) Although he remained in the Mormon Church because he assumed incorrect things from his Gethsemane experience, my experience eventually brought me out of the church into the complete truth of Biblical Christianity.

Why did God give me my Peter Testimony while still a Mormon?

Simply put . . . "*prevenient grace*." According to Wikipedia.com, the term originated with John Wesley in the 18th century. In today's English, it could be restated as *preceding grace*; that is, "divine grace that precedes human decision." (See endnote 2 for scriptural examples.) I'm mentioning the subject of God's grace because there are some Christians who believe only they are entitled to receive it--most certainly, not a Mormon!

God wants to exert his loving, prevenient grace on Mormons, or any who are involved in false religions, hoping he can lead them to come out and embrace the truth. But, if they choose to ignore his promptings or any experiences that he may graciously give them and stay in the Mormon Church, he will not force them by violating their free will. The words to an old Protestant hymn says: "*He'll call, persuade, direct aright, and bless with wisdom, love and light. In nameless ways be good and kind, but never force the human mind.*"

Free will (or free agency as Mormons call it) involves the soul (intellect, behavior and emotions) and predominantly exerts strong dominion over a person. Therefore, because it is the soul that is in charge of exercising the free will, the soul often has the last word. So, if a Mormon has received a Peter Testimony, or some other valid experience, his soul may dominate and he may choose to stay. The reason may be: (1) he or she has used the all-or-nothing logic, (2) perceives the devastating repercussions from leaving, including family estrangement, or (3) love and bias for the LDS Church. The influence of the LDS Church is indeed strong—so much so, that I have actually heard Mormons say, "*Even if God himself or an angel appeared to me and told me the church was wrong, I would never leave.*"

Since I wanted to follow the Lord, come what may, I used my free agency and eventually left, guided by the hand of God. But, he knew how difficult this would be for me. So, to begin with, he gave me the Peter Testimony, knowing that if he was going to bring me out of false doctrine there had to be a springboard from which I could be launched—something that would give me a firm testimony and solid foundation under my feet--a Rock that I could stand on that would not crumble or shift when later I went through the trauma of requesting my excommunication, having friends turn their backs on me and being told I was in the devil's territory--also, when I was pressured to renounce Jesus when I was held prisoner by the Mormon Fundamentalists and, lastly, when entering a Christian church and going through the painful ordeal of transition. None of this was easy--in fact, quite stressful. (See my book, *Out of the Cults and into the Church*. Also, see endnote 3, *how my Patriarchal Blessing predicted LDS friends turning their back on me.*)

Before I exited the Mormon Church, what did my Peter Testimony do for me?

A Peter Testimony will always draw you to the Bible with new eyes so as to understand more about Jesus and his divine mission (that is, if you have not used the all-or-nothing logic). The Holy Ghost lit a fire in me to do this and I discovered the Bible in a totally new and exciting way. I began to read it from a non-Mormon perspective (a miracle in itself). I fell in love with Jesus Christ, his work, doctrines, principles, love and power! Then, I made posters of favorite scriptures and hung them all over the house, one in particular on the wall at the end of my bed so I would see it the first thing in the morning:

I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

I was teaching the Gospel Doctrine class and got into trouble one time when I dared to interject some of my new thinking--I told the class that Baptists also have their prayers answered. People actually stood up and walked out of class over that!

In addition, my Peter Testimony did other things for me. The Holy Ghost quickened an inner

ability to discern between correct and incorrect principles promulgated in the church. I remember one example in the church magazine, when President Harold B. Lee quoted the late President Heber J. Grant:

Brethren, keep your eye on the President of this Church. If he tells you to do anything and it is *wrong*, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it. (Ensign, October 1972, p. 7. Italics mine)

Whoa! Since when did God say he'd bless individuals for doing something wrong just because someone tells them to do it? It was an incorrect principle from the word go. Faithful Mormons consider the President of the church a Prophet of God, so it is understandable why they would accept this without questioning or praying about it. But, the Holy Ghost was teaching me.

Another one blew my mind:

Lucifer wins a great victory when he can get members of the church to . . . do their own thinking . . . When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done!" (Improvement Era, June 1945, p. 354)

What--no thinking allowed? Prior to my experience, I would have blindly accepted in a heartbeat anything church leaders dictated--especially coming from the "Prophet." But, unquestioning obedience to anyone who states something contrary to God's Biblical principles, without any thinking or weighing the matter on their own, guided by the Holy Ghost, is definitely wrong. When I asked a few in the ward if they ever prayed about church statements, they said, "*I don't have to pray. I'm to do what my leaders tell me--they won't lead me astray.*" (Members of Jim Jones' church come to mind.)

The eyes of my understanding, as Paul states in Eph. 1:18, continued to be enlightened by the Holy Ghost wherein God gave me another insightful revelation when I was teaching on the Dead Sea Scrolls. When I discovered that 95% of the words from the Isaiah scroll were identical with the Hebrew text in our present Bible (5% being minor slips of the pen and variations in spelling), I concluded that the Bible, despite the Mormon claim that it isn't translated correctly and is unreliable for doctrine, was well preserved after all. My next thought, which would never have entered my mind prior to my Peter Testimony was, "If my leaders are wrong about THAT, what else could they be wrong about? This was daring, but God was bringing the blinders down.

Next, God wanted me to learn something of crucial importance--the truth about his character.

Although the Holy Ghost had already drawn me to the Bible and I was in love with Jesus, I had a wrong concept of God the Father, which is probably why I focused more on reading the New Testament rather than the Old.

To me, God (a glorified man) was a stern, ungracious Father in heaven and as portrayed in the Old Testament, a hard, whip-cracking taskmaster who allowed for no mistakes or it was "off with your head." I'm sure the church's impossible mandate of perfection, which I knew I fell short of, influenced me, as well as my experience with my strict, earthly father, in whose eyes I could never do anything right. I had no concept of what love was, or what it felt like. All in all, I was scared of God.

He needed to correct this. How? Well, experience is the best teacher--and seeing is believing.

One night, I received a vision in which I found myself in heaven, standing before the throne of God. I looked up the steps to the throne and I saw Jesus seated in a white robe. "*Uh oh...*" Fear was my first reaction. I stood very still with my head down, feeling totally guilty and unworthy, expecting the worst kind of rejection.

Then, I glanced up and much to my surprise Jesus stood, came down the steps with outstretched arms, and walked towards me. His beautiful face was smiling with a love and acceptance of me that was absolutely beyond description. I didn't just see it in his face, I felt it! All sense of guilt and condemnation immediately evaporated. He wrapped his arms around me and held me in an embrace that rapturously enveloped me with an indescribable kind of glorious and exquisite love that no English words could possibly relay. Not only was I immersed in it, the whole atmosphere around us was also suffused with this love--it was the very breath of heaven. Neither did He have to speak to tell me that he loved me, for it was all relayed through his embrace and the love that radiated from him. Never had I experienced anything like this! I shall never forget it.

As a result, I learned that my concept of a cruel and fearful God was erroneous. He was a God of love, not the hard taskmaster I had envisioned for so many years. His love probably affected me more powerfully because it was the first time I'd ever felt what love was like. Even though I had fallen in love with the Jesus in the Bible, I never knew what it was to experience someone else's love toward me.

God gave me other wonderful lessons through visions and other ways, a few of which I learned later during the time I left the mainline church and secretly entered Mormon Fundamentalism to live a United Order for a year. There, I hoped to perfect myself and grow closer to God by living in a community where I could share everything I had with others. But, as I explain in my story, *Escape from the Cult*, God allowed me to go into this situation knowing I was a studier with an intellectual bent and would need to see the truth about Mormonism in black and white. He knew that within that organization I would gain access to very old, out-of-print Mormon books and manuscripts that had been carefully handed down from early Mormon times, and would ultimately serve to be my route out.

Through the material I read, I learned about the doctrines and practices that Mormonism was founded upon. I discovered shocking things about Joseph Smith; also, strange temple rituals that I never heard of nor witnessed when I went through the temple. I read of men being sealed (married) to men instead of men to women, and suggestive innuendoes of how these sealings were to be consummated, which a rare few Fundamentalist groups, I learned later, practice today. In addition, I was not prepared to read about women having plural husbands, although I was familiar with the doctrine of plural wives.

How could I belong to something that believed like that! And while the mainline church today no longer practices many of them, it was, nevertheless, what the church was *founded* upon. I was able to see it in black and white for myself, and not from anti-Mormon literature erroneously declared by the church to be lies. Intellectually, it was what I needed to complete my coming-out process. Then, when things really got bad (*when the group held me prisoner for refusing to renounce Jesus and I nearly died*), God audibly spoke to me, enabled my escape, and later healed me of the physical infirmities I suffered from the ordeal. After escaping, I briefly returned to the mainline church and requested my excommunication.

God gave me many experiences, but I will share some of those, a few at a time, under the new link, *Faith-promoting Stories*.

What is the "Burning Bosom" phenomenon?

The "Burning Bosom" phenomenon is supposed to be a special witness from God to a Mormon, or a convert, that Joseph Smith is a prophet and his doctrines and scripture (Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants and Pearl of Great Price) are true. However, it is only fair for me to point out that not all members believe that this is the method to use in finding truth. (*See Elder Dalin H Oakes' statement further down.*) A few teach that the burning bosom phenomenon was only for Joseph Smith in translating records that were in an unknown language.

But for the majority of members, they believe in the testimony via the Burning Bosom, with many claiming to have received it. The phenomenon is strictly a *bodily* sensation (*further described below*), but is also subjective and often emotionally based, thus, susceptible to deception.

Leaders quote Doctrine and Covenants 9:8, which says that the procedure to receive a Burning Bosom testimony is for an individual seeking, for example, to know if the Book of Mormon is true, to first study it out in their mind. Now, this is fine if converts or members, in their study, would compare everything about the Book of Mormon and the story of its origin to the Bible, but they don't. They listen to the missionaries pull Bible passages out of context and explain their "logic" on how a good "feeling" is the evidence of a truthful witness. It is all very logical, so the convert's mind soon becomes convinced that Mormonism has to be true. (See my article, *Strategies of the LDS Church*.) Once convinced, either by logic, their good feelings, burning bosom or spine tingling, that they've received confirmation from the Holy Ghost, their heart responds in a positive and joyful way.

Usually, missionaries will tell potential converts to get a testimony of the Book of Mormon first--and there's a reason for this. Joseph Smith plagiarized by loading the Book of Mormon with scriptures and doctrines from the Bible. His bizarre doctrines came later, so are not in the Book of Mormon. This is the reason missionaries focus on the Book of Mormon and why it is such a good proselytizing tool. When I first read the Book of Mormon, my heart responded to those truths and I experienced a "joyful swelling" in my heart and felt a witness, for the Holy Ghost can do nothing but witness to the truth of Biblical principles. The Holy Ghost was *not* witnessing to the source claimed for the Book of Mormon, angel Moroni, etc. Interestingly, I never received this same swelling joy concerning the angel Moroni, or Joseph Smith and his gold plates, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, temple ordinances, or any burning bosom or spine tingles. But because I felt the *contents* of the Book of Mormon true, I just *assumed* everything else about the church also had to be true.

There are active Mormons who have never received this experience. Of course, they don't let anyone in the ward know this because they are concerned that it would sound like they aren't spiritual enough for God to give it to them. But there are rare times, however, when they share this failure between close friends. The wife of my Bishop shared with me that she had never received it. Still, they stand up in testimony meeting and declare they know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the church is true, Joseph Smith was a prophet, including Jesus is the Christ, etc.

One Mormon, determined to receive a burning bosom testimony of the church, believed the Book of Mormon when it said that all he had to do is ask God and he'd manifest the truth to him. The church magazine, *The Ensign*, published his story. Every night, he asked the same questions about whether the Book of Mormon and the LDS church was true, and did Jesus really appear to Joseph Smith, etc. He waited and waited for an answer, burning bosom, spine tingles or something. But received no answer. Then, finally to his surprise, after he kept posing his questions, he heard a voice inside him ask:

"What do you think?"

He told God that he believed the church was true and that he never doubted it. Then, the voice came again:

"Then why do you ask?"

The young man concluded that the message was divine and that his previous acceptance of the truth of Mormonism was sufficient as a testimony. He didn't need a burning bosom or special revelation--revelation was just for those who need it. (16)

The principle relayed in this man's story was that God goes along with whatever the person already believes. (*Not very Biblical.*)

What does this phenomenon actually feel like?

Some say the chest actually becomes physically warm, while others say it is electric tingles, both considered valid by many, including the missionaries. A Utah Bishop described his Holy Ghost witness to Mormonism as a strong tingling down his spine, but admitted that he sometimes received a similar feeling while watching a moving program on television. (5) The instruction manual for the missionaries says that they are to tell potential converts that a "good feeling" is the yardstick for truth. (*I have the manual in my possession, and served two stake missions myself, using the "good feeling" logic.*)

LDS, Elder Callin H. Oaks, speaking on the church's position on revelation and in response to critics, states:

Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surely, the word "burning" in this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity. That is the witness many receive. That is the way revelation works" (13)

But, in contrast to his statement, I have actually heard individuals testify that they received this "caloric heat," and described it as literally, a physical warmth in their chest. If, according to Oaks, all a person has to receive is a feeling of being "comfortable and serene," one has to wonder about those many individuals in other unbiblical religious institutions who feel very serene and comfortable in the religious setting they've embraced. As a Mormon, I did.

When a bodily manifestation occurs, such as a tingling, burning bosom or whatever, it is physical. However, the Biblical testimony of Jesus that is imparted by the Holy Ghost is *spiritual*--not a physical tingling in the body. Jesus never said to Peter, "*Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, but the spine tingling, burning bosom, heat-in-the-chest and feeling of comfort and serenity did.*"

Now, there's nothing wrong with feeling joy in one's heart over finding out that something is true. But, the Bible tells us that the heart is deceptive, so the heart can't be reliable. Now, if one actually receives a genuine testimony via the Holy Ghost, emotion and happiness of one's heart can follow *afterwards*. But, it isn't the way to test the truthfulness of something. The test of truth is by measuring everything with what God says in the Bible.

This, then, raises the question: Can our own hearts and feelings deceive us? Yes, the Bible warns us about this:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?
(Jeremiah 17:9)

He feedeth on ashes; *a deceived heart hath turned him aside*, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? (Isaiah 44:20)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool, but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.
(Proverbs 28:26)

What causes this Burning Bosom or the electric tingle phenomena in the LDS Church?
According to some, there are three possible answers:

- (1) A false spirit can relay the burning.
- (2) Intimidation from others, so the person unconsciously forces one up. (It's not hard to get your spine to tingle.)
- (3) One's own heart and psyche can produce the experience simply because the individual sincerely wants Mormonism to be true—after all, it's claims are quite spectacular.

I'm more inclined to discount number 1, and believe that more often it is number 3, influenced by number 2.

Former Mormon, David McCament, a member for 13 years, says he received the traditional feelings about the truthfulness of Mormonism, but began studying and comparing the church's doctrines to the Bible. Seeing that the two contradicted each other, he went through a lot of turmoil and questioning. How could this be when he had the typical and distinctive sensations after he initially prayed concerning the Book of Mormon and the church? Eventually, he reached a point where he went into the woods with his Bible and prayed:

In this state of helplessness I began praying out loud. "What do you want me to do, Father? I've studied hard, I've learned of significant problems with my church, but when I've prayed I have felt a warmth in my heart that I have always believed was the Holy Ghost telling me the Church was true.

As I knelt there, waiting prayerfully upon the Lord, a gentle but persuasive calm came over me. I cannot explain it nor adequately describe the entire experience but somehow I heard the Lord speak to my spirit through a series of thoughts or impressions. "Dave, I love you," He assured me. "I know how hard you've looked for an answer about your church and what to do. You thought you could figure it out on your own. Now you realize you cannot. I've been waiting all this time to help you but you had to come to Me first, like you are right now, helpless and surrendered, before I could. What you hold in your hands [the Bible] contains the truth about the Church and what you are to believe. You must place all of your trust in Me and in My Word alone. I decided right then I would believe it by faith apart from feelings. (Read his testimony at: <http://www.utlm.org/testimony/davemctestimony.htm>)

The test for truth

Proverbs 28:26 admonishes us to check and see if what we are inquiring about lines up with the Word of God. Testing must come by comparing what one is evaluating with what the Bible says--not by emotional feelings, one's heart, or bodily manifestations. The Bible is God's official yardstick, purposely preserved by his hand down through the ages so that all his children could measure whether something is true or not and avoid being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. (Eph 4:14) Continuous discovery of more ancient manuscripts is proving the Bible's accuracy.

God also says in His Word that we are obliged to test whatever spirit or influence is attempting to convert or convince us of something.

Beloved, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. (1 Jn 4:1. Ampl)

So, how do we test religious claims? Not by electric tingles, burning bosom, goose bumps or good feelings in our heart, but "*by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.*" (Mt 4:4) And where do we find God's word? In the Bible--and only the Bible. Paul, in Gal. 1:8, offers a specific test:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Does Mormonism teach a different gospel? While they do teach that Christ died on the cross for their sins, they believe he effected only a partial salvation. It will get you resurrected, but full salvation (exaltation) has to be earned through Mormonism's unique doctrines and temple rituals that they believe God has only revealed to them because they are the elect.

The LDS Church definitely preaches "another gospel," for neither Jesus nor his apostles ever said that polygamy, secret passwords, death penalties, and vicarious work for the dead (a Gnostic practice) were required to enter the presence of God. Nor did they teach that God is not the Supreme and only God, or that he had parents and grandparents and was a polygamous, resurrected man from a previous world. They didn't teach that men could become gods (*Satan's first lie to Adam and Eve. (Gen 3:5; Jn 8:44)*), or that Lucifer is Jesus' brother, or that God physically came down and impregnated Mary, or that salvation/exaltation can only come through Jesus and the say-so of Joseph Smith. (*See comparison chart between Mormonism and Christianity, endnote 7.*)

Nor did the apostles say that one day what they stated about the priesthood would be subject to change so that LDS males could later usurp the Melchizedek priesthood, reserved only for Christ. (Heb. Ch 7) As far as priesthood goes, the Bible only says that after Jesus' resurrection, all believers, male and female, would be declared a holy nation of royal priests, in that they would from then on offer up *spiritual* sacrifices. (I Pet. 2:5; Rom. 12:1). But, today's believers are not so presumptuous to assume that they hold Christ's priesthood. (9)

Nor did the writers of the Bible say that High Priests (*who oversaw the sacrificial system*) were still to be ordained and that there could be many at the same time. In the Old Testament there was never but one High Priest at a time, with the exception of one instance (6). Upon the death of the high priest, another was appointed and this was repeated down through history until Christ. But, when Christ, the perfect and ultimate sacrificial lamb died, he became the final High Priest. (Heb. 7:27; 10:10) Ordinances were then nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14 KJV) and Israel's system of high priests and animal sacrifices were done away with. After his resurrection, Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in heaven and became our *eternal* and only High Priest. Since he cannot die, there would be no need to appoint other High Priests like the LDS Church does. (Heb. 3:1; 4:14-16; Chaps 5-10.) Anyone who would assume this position should be ashamed. Neither should Mormons seize the Aaronic Priesthood. This was a lineage priesthood that not even Jesus could hold. (9)

What is the difference between the Burning Bosom and the Peter Testimony?

Concisely put, the Burning Bosom is physical, a bodily manifestation which also includes human emotions and feelings. The Peter Testimony is a *spiritual* conviction imparted by the Holy Ghost who bears witness to our spirit--not our body--with revelation knowledge that is not based on human feelings. It is spirit to spirit, and what it conveys corroborates the Bible.

Now, for the sake of fairness, let's say the Holy Ghost does legitimately witness the truth to a person with bodily manifestations and emotions. It still begs the question: *How could a Burning Bosom testimony be valid concerning Mormonism, when the LDS Church not only contradicts, criticizes and denies the accuracy of the Bible, but also adds unbiblical doctrines that Jesus and the apostles never taught?* In the long run, this is the crux of the matter. A Christian's testimony will be confirmed by the Bible, but the Bible will not confirm Mormonism.

If you are a Mormon and have received a Spirit-to-spirit conviction that the Biblical Jesus' work and his status as the Christ is true, just be sure you don't make the assumption, as so many have done, that it includes things other than what the Holy Ghost actually conveyed to you.

Is there a concern about today's Mormon receiving a Peter testimony of Christ (versus years ago)?

There is a concern, because LDS leaders today, hoping to draw more converts in, are now bent on portraying the church as "Christian." To further facilitate this, they are omitting their unbiblical doctrines from teaching manuals and restricting ward leaders and teachers from making any reference to them. This was a shock to long-time Mormon, Ken Driggs:

For a long time, I taught the Gospel Principles class in my ward. One Sunday we sang a hymn in sacrament meeting that referred to our Mother in Heaven, Eliza R. Snow's *O My Father. "In heav'n are parents single? / No, the thought makes reason stare! Truth is reason; truth eternal / tells me I've a mother there."* The manual touched on family that Sunday, and I mentioned the Heavenly Mother in my lesson. I did not see that belief as heretical. Rather, it was something I had been taught all my life. After class a furious missionary scolded me for bringing this up, for "not teaching from the manual." Apparently an investigator had been in class and freaked out at the reference. (10)

Therefore, ward leaders and teachers are to only focus on talking about Christ and general and acceptable beliefs that sound more Christian. While this is commendable, it is deceptive. Why? Because church leaders are not *renouncing* their doctrines, but hiding them--which means they still really believe them. There are, however, pros and cons to this, so for fuller coverage I recommend reading my archived article, *Is the Mormon Church Turning Christian?*

So, the danger for a Mormon in receiving a Peter Testimony today, especially for converts, is because the church focuses so much on Christ and conceals its unbiblical doctrines. In view of this, they won't see the advantage of leaving the church to embrace true Christianity. Further, by staying in, they will eventually be convinced that they must earn their salvation through temple work and other activities so that one day they can become a god or goddess. They will find their growth in biblical doctrines stunted and will fail to understand the *complete* and final work of the cross, not to mention their eventual disappointment in heaven when they find these beliefs false. It is still a church that believes in earning salvation through works as verified in their Third Article of Faith:

We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

Gal. 2:16 tells us that, "...a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Those who put laws and ordinances into the *Good News* of the Gospel, make it *bad news*."(11)

Have you received a Biblically based Peter Testimony?

I emphasize "Biblically-based," because the Peter Testimony that Jesus is the Christ will only validate what the Bible says about Jesus and his mission--nothing more, nothing less. This revelation knowledge can happen when one genuinely receives a salvation experience. And since God is love, it is not unusual for the Holy Ghost to relay God's love during that experience. This, then, provides a continuing joy thereafter, as Dean Kinzel describes:

When I received Jesus as my savior, there was such a great love that flooded over me in the recognition of the fact that Jesus loved me so much that He died on the cross for my sins. The joy from this love was just indescribable; and still is as a matter of fact. This I believe was revealed to me by the Holy Spirit . . . for it is the Holy Spirit that is the very presence of God within us. (15)

Or, it can also happen during prayer time, or as you are meditating on God's word in the Bible. Former Mormon, Dave McCament, commenting on his first experience in the woods, (*quoted*

earlier) says that revelation knowledge not only comes to him by God speaking words within his spirit, but also from the Holy Ghost when he reads the Bible.

About the most direct answer I ever had coming from God was when He told me He loved me, that He was waiting for me to come to Him broken and surrendered, and that the answer I was seeking was found in His Word. I knew God was speaking to me...but I can't explain how He did it. Sometimes enlightenment will come (an example is when you are reading the Bible and a verse leaps off the page, hits you between the eyes, and God says, "This is right for you now") during scripture reading that is intense and blesses me deeply with greater understanding and insight. I have a certainty of belief in Jesus that is Bible-based and kept supernaturally alive in me via the Holy Spirit indwelling me . . . My knowledge of Jesus comes from faith in the Word of God and is centered in how He has revealed Himself through scripture. (8)

When one receives the Peter testimony from the Holy Ghost, this indwelling comes in such a strong manner and testifies of Christ so powerfully, "*you know that you know*" that it is not of yourself. It is the kind of testimony that flesh and blood, intellect, logic, heat in your bosom, electric tingles or your own heart can never reveal to you--only God. It is the imperative foundation for all true believers, and will always testify to the gospel that Jesus actually taught in the Bible, that of full forgiveness, reconciliation to the Father and promise of eternal life--not the kind of eternal life that Mormonism defines as temple ritual, godhood and plural marriage. When you come to the cross, there is nothing else you can possibly do to "earn" your way to heaven. However, a life of good works as admonished by Jesus follows because of one's faith, but there is no "earning" power in it. While James 2:20 says, "faith without works is dead," you are still saved by a saving faith alone. The Holy Spirit guarantees this:

And when you *believed* in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's *guarantee* that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. (Eph. 1:13-14)

Until next time!

To read Christian testimonies, go to: (<http://www.precious-testimonies.com/General/a-e/BornAgainIndex.htm>)

For former Mormon, David McCament's testimony, go to: (<http://www.utlm.org/testimony/davemctestimony.htm>)

The following site gives twenty-four ways to identify a false religion and how seductive deception can be. (<http://www.jubilee.org.nz/articles/how-to-identify-a-cult>)

END

ENDNOTES

(1) The Book of Mormon is the easiest to gain a testimony about because it contains so many Christian truths from the Bible. Joseph Smith also addressed many of the issues taking place with the Christian evangelism of his day. Only later did he come up with his bizarre doctrines. Therefore, when members testify about the Book of Mormon, they are truly testifying to the Biblical truths contained in it. They hardly even had to pray about it to know it's true--which was the case with me. But what they fail to pray about is

whether an angel named Moroni delivered gold plates to Joseph Smith. And because they receive a witness that the "contents" of the Book of Mormon are true, they then "assume" that everything else about Mormonism is also the truth, including the angel and the gold plates.

(2) Jeremiah 31:3: "...I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."
Ezekiel 34:11, 16: "(11) As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.(16) I will seek that which was lost and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. . . ." Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." John 6:44: "No man can come unto me, unless the Father who hath sent me, draw him..." Romans 2:4: "...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance..." Philippians 2:12-13: "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you according to his good pleasure, both to will and to do." 1 John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."

(3) A Patriarchal Blessing in the LDS Church is a prophetic utterance in which certain blessings are pronounced on members, their future often declared, and a statement as to which tribe they descend from. Of interest is one particular statement the patriarch said in mine—that I would be spit upon, hated and disdained, but that I was to take heart for God would be with me. At the time this puzzled me, for little did I know that this "disdaining" would be fulfilled by my LDS friends when I left the church.

(4) Mike H. Reynolds, "Preaching to the Choir," *The Inner Circle* 12, No. 3 (March 1995): 6.

(5) <http://www.utlm.org/testimony/davemctestimony.htm>

(6) "There were two high priests in the reign of David, apparently of nearly equal authority, viz., Zadok and Abiathar (I Chron. 15:11; 2II Sam. 8:17; 15:24, 35). It is not unlikely that after the death of Ahimelech and the secession of Abiathar to David, Saul may have made Zadok priest, and that David may have avoided the difficulty of deciding between the claims of his faithful friend Abiathar and his new and important ally Zadok by appointing them to a joint priesthood; the first place, with the ephod and Urim and Thummim remaining with Abiathar, who was in actual possession of them. It appears that Abiathar had special charge of the ark and the services connected therewith, which agrees exactly with the possession of the ephod by Biathar and his previous position with David before he became king. Abiathar, however, forfeited his place by taking part with Adonijah against Solomon, and Zadok was made high priest in his place." (Unger's Bible Dictionary by Merrill F. Unger, Chicago. Moody Press, 1980) 888.)

(7) Differences Between Christianity and Mormonism (below). Also, a study of Gnosticism will prove quite revealing to members and investigators of Mormonism; see summary in my book, *The Mormon Missionaries*, pages 185, 192-194.)

Mormonism teaches:

The Existence of many Gods
(*Journal of Discourses 2:345*)

God the Father is an exalted man
(*Doctrine & Covenants 130:22*)

God the Father has a physical body
(*Doctrine & Covenants 130:22*)

God the Father had a beginning
(*The Seer, 132*)

God the Father has parents
(*The Seer, 132*)

God the Father is a polygamist
(*The Seer, 172*)

God only "organized" the universe
(*Mormon Doctrine 589-590*)

Jesus was the physical Son of God
(*Mormon Doctrine, 546-547*)

Jesus became a God
(*Deseret News, June 17, 1901*)

Jesus and Satan are brothers
(*Gospel Through the Ages, 15*)

Jesus was a polygamist
(*Journal of discourses, 1:345-346*)

Men can become Gods
(*Journal of Discourses, 2:345*)

There is salvation after death
(*Mormon Doctrine 669-672*)

There is salvation only in the LDS Church
(*Doctrines of Salvation 1:350*)

Salvation is through Jesus and Joseph Smith
(*Journal of Discourses, 7:289*)

Christianity teaches:

There is only one God
(*Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 43:10*)

God the Father is not a man
(*Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 31:3*)

God the Father is Spirit
(*John 4:24*)

God the Father is Eternal
(*Isaiah 43:13*)

God the Father has no parents
(*Isaiah 43:13*)

God is not married
(*Mark 12:28-30*)

God created the universe
(*Genesis 1:1; John 1:1*)

Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit
(*Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35*)

Jesus has always been God
(*John 1:1-18; Colossians 2:9*)

Satan is only a created being
(*Isaiah 14:12-15; Rev. 12:9*)

Jesus has only one bride: the Church
(*Revelation 19:7-9; 21:9*)

Men can only become children of God
(*John 1:12; Romans 8:23*)

There is no salvation after death
(*Hebrews 9:27*)

There is salvation only in Jesus Christ
(*John 14:6*)

Salvation is only through Jesus
(*John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9*)

In bearing testimony of Jesus Christ, the late Mormon Prophet, Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley, when asked if he believed in the traditional Christ of Christians, stated:

"No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they (the Christians) speak is not the Christ of whom I speak." (Church News, June 20, 1998, p. 7)

- (8) Dave McCament, Escondido, CA. Read his testimony at:
<http://www.utlm.org/testimony/davemctestimony.htm>

(9) "But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light." (I Peter 2:9)

In the Old Testament only the High Priests qualified to have direct access to God by presenting blood sacrifices. But since they were done away with in Christ who was the ultimate blood sacrifice and he has become our High Priest, God is accessible to all believers because of their royal priesthood. They can approach God with boldness and are empowered to converse with God and minister to others. Hebrews 4:14, 16 says:

"Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession [the faith we profess]. ...Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the matter of the Aaronic priesthood, this was reserved only for the descendants of Aaron. Mormons claim to be of the tribes of Ephraim and Manassah, not Aaron. They, however, believe that until a Mormon steps forth with a legitimate claim to being a descendant of Aaron (*which is usually supernaturally disclosed through one's patriarchal blessing*), members can substitutionally officiate in those duties. So, now they ordain young men, older men if they are new converts, to the Aaronic priesthood even though they are *not* descendants of Aaron. But, what is so presumptuous is that in the Bible, God was very strict about who could hold the Aaronic priesthood. Because Christ was of the tribe of Judah, even He couldn't hold it. (Heb. 7:14) That makes Mormon men making themselves more privileged than Christ! That alone, ought to refute the Mormon Aaronic priesthood. The following should be helpful.

BIBLE

The New Testament church did not have High Priests.

God was strict about which tribe could hold the Aaronic priesthood. Even Jesus was denied because he was of the tribe of Judah.

God ended the Aaronic priesthood since it only served to point to Christ.

Animal sacrifice was ended, since it pointed to Christ

There was only one major High Priest in the Old Testament at a time.

Old Testament High Priests never held the Melchizedek Priesthood.

New Testament believers never had the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthood conferred upon them.

Jesus, after his resurrection, held an eternal, untransmissible priesthood. It no longer had to be passed on in order to be continued

God said all believers regardless of race or gender are priests and hold royal priesthood since they sacrifice to God daily.

Jesus did not lay hands on his disciples to confer either the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthood.

MORMON CHURCH

The Mormon Church, claiming to be a restoration of the New Testament church, ordains High Priests.

Mormons disregard this restriction. Alleging to be of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, they still claim this right.

Mormons reinstated the Aaronic priesthood

Mormons anticipate the reinstatement of animal sacrifice.

Mormons have many.

Mormon High Priests hold the Melchizedek priesthood.

Mormons confer both.

Mormons insist the Melchizedek priesthood is transmissible and must be passed on to someone to perpetuate it.

Mormon priesthood is reserved only for males.

Mormons lay on hands to confer both priesthoods.

(10) "A New Future Requires a New Past." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 41, No. 2, Summer 2008), 75. (Italics mine.)

(11) "Truth." <http://www.frontiernet.net/~avtruth/faithvworks.html>

(12) WWW.GREATERTHINGS.COM/Essays/testimony.htm

(13) http://en.fairmormon.org/Burning_in_the_bosom.

(14) The Mormon Church does not believe Acts 4:12, that Christ is the only name under heaven by which a man can be saved. Rather, to be resurrected or saved in any of the three levels within the Celestial Kingdom, it is through membership in the LDS Church and Joseph Smith's name. (*Doctrines of Salvation* 1:350)

Brigham Young and other church leaders reiterated this:

"No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith."

"No man or woman in this generation will get a *resurrection* and be crowned *without Joseph saying so*. (Conference discourse on October 8, 1854. See also, (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. VII, p. 289)

"So hear it all ye ends of the earth; if you ever enter into the kingdom of God, it is because Joseph Smith let you go there."

"Every man and woman must have the certification of Joseph Smith, Junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are." (Brigham Young)

There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "Exaltation is available only to righteous members of the Church of Jesus Christ; only to those who accept the gospel; only to those who have their endowments in holy temples of God and have been sealed for eternity and who then continue to live righteously throughout their lives. (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, 246.

(15) Dean Kinzel, Marysville, WA.

(16) <http://library.lds.org/nxt/gateway.dll/Magazines/Ensign/1992.htm/ensign>

END

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