

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 1 of 14

On this broadcast, we begin a series of messages on a subject that is most vital for the Bible believing church in our time. That subject is the false religion of Mormonism.

A Long-Intended Series

I have wanted to speak to you on the subject of Mormonism for some time, and for many reasons. At TeachingTheWord Ministries we receive frequent inquiries from readers and listeners who are encountering Mormonism in many different places. Many of them first encounter members of the Mormon church when Mormon missionaries come to their doors seeking to convert them to their religion. We also receive inquiries from people come in contact with members of the Mormon church in the workplace, or in school, or in their neighborhoods. I can certainly identify with those of you who have contacted us, because when I was in the business world years ago, before the Lord called me to the ministry, one of my managers was a Mormon, and also several of my coworkers were Mormons. And, I too have had the Mormons come to my door.

We are beginning this series on Mormonism just a few days after a United States presidential election in which one of the two leading candidates was also the most prominent of all members of the Mormon church. But I did not want to speak on this subject until after the election, because I think it was very important for TeachingTheWord Ministries not to take, or in any way appear to take, a partisan political position. In fact, United States law forbids us from doing that. And so, we

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Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 2 of 14

decided to wait until the outcome of the election was known before we broadcast this series for the first time. The timing needed to be right.

So-Called Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism

And the timing is right, because we face a very critical situation in the church today. For the last several years, prominent Evangelical leaders have been exhibiting what I can only describe as an enormous lack of discernment, a tragic lack of discernment, regarding the dangers of Mormonism. Mormonism has become a direct threat to the Evangelical church. Let me give you some examples.

In August 2010, many noted Evangelical leaders participated in a rally on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. This rally was organized and led by a man named Glenn Beck, who is a very prominent radio and television personality in the United States. Glenn Beck is a prominent member of the Mormon church. This rally was attended by half a million people, and millions more around the world saw it on television.

According to published news reports, many people who are prominent in the Evangelical church stood with Glenn Beck at that rally. Among them were Liberty University president Dr. Jerry Falwell Jr., the son of the late Dr. Jerry Falwell who once led a movement called the Moral Majority; former Focus On the Family president Dr. James Dobson; Dr. Richard Land, who is a leader in the Southern Baptist Convention; Chuck Norris, the Evangelical television and movie star and syndicated columnist; mega-church pastor John Hagee; and a number of others.

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 3 of 14

Now, the stated purpose of this August 2010 rally was to “restore honor in America.” The theme of the rally was a combination of religion and politics. Mr. Beck had recruited these Evangelical leaders – along with a number of Roman Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, Mormon leaders, and even some Muslim imams – he had recruited all of these leaders to work together in an ecumenical effort to bring political change to the United States.

Mr. Beck said this – and I quote – “These men and women [these religious leaders who are on the platform with me] don’t agree on fundamentals. They don’t agree on everything that every church teaches. What they do agree on is that God is the answer.” Now dear friends, whose “God” was the answer was certainly not clear. But certainly, in such an ecumenical gathering, the “God” of which Glenn Beck spoke could not be the God of the Bible.

And Dr. Falwell, the president of Liberty University, spoke for many of these ecumenical church leaders when he said this – and I’m quoting. He said that “Glenn Beck’s Mormon faith is irrelevant” to what we are trying to achieve by working together and appearing together on this platform. Dear friends, when a Mormon leader gathers leaders together from all kinds of religions to promote a spiritual agenda, only a person who is blind to the truth could say that his religion is “irrelevant.”

Another example of this Evangelical infatuation with Mormonism is Joel Osteen, who is pastor of the 50,000 member Lakewood Church in Houston Texas, the largest

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Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 4 of 14

nominally Evangelical church in the United States. On a Fox News program, Mr. Osteen was asked by an interviewer, "Do you believe that Mormons are Christians?" And Mr. Osteen's response was this. He said – and I'm quoting him – "Well in my mind, they are." Mormons are Christians, according to Mr. Osteen. Mr. Osteen simply ignored the fact that Jesus said that there will be many at the Last Judgment who will profess a false Jesus – many who will say "Lord, Lord" – but Jesus, according to Matthew 7:23, will say to them, "I never knew you. Depart from Me."

We also have this, from Dr. Richard Mouw, who is the president of Fuller Theological Seminary in California. And I think it is worth noting that Fuller Seminary is also the spiritual birthplace of the Purpose-Driven Church movement. Dr. Mouw has written an essay titled "Mormonism Isn't A Cult" in which he said this – and I'm quoting him. He said, "While I am not prepared to reclassify Mormonism as possessing undeniably Christian theology, I do accept many of my Mormon friends as genuine followers of the Jesus whom I worship as the divine Savior." Well, that makes me wonder what kind of a "Jesus" Dr. Mouw worships. It doesn't sound like the Jesus of the Bible.

Dr. Mouw also said that even though there are theological differences between Mormons and Evangelicals, he said that these differences can be patched over through what he called a process of "give and take conversations." Now, I think it is reasonable to ask: Just what does he propose that Evangelicals should give up to Mormons in such conversations? And just what does he propose that true Christians should take from the false Mormon religion, and incorporate into the church? Well,

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 5 of 14

he did not give an answer, but I cannot imagine any answer that would be acceptable to the God of the Bible.

And dear friends, it is worthwhile for us to stop and recognize the fact that this kind of thinking echoes the kind of thinking that we saw a number of years ago that resulted in the *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* documents. Those documents were the result of so-called Evangelical leaders working together in compromise with Roman Catholic leaders, and they sacrificed Biblical essentials such as the doctrine of justification by faith alone, on the altar of ecumenical compromise, in order to open the way for cooperation in spiritual causes.

And we have yet another example, more recently, in October 2012. Dr. Billy Graham and Dr. Franklin Graham met with Mormon presidential candidate Mitt Romney. The Grahams prayed with Mr. Romney, and they offered their support of his efforts to convince skeptical Evangelicals to vote for a Mormon. As part of that effort, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association immediately removed references to Mormonism as a non-Christian cult from their website. They suppressed and denied the truth about Mormonism.

But dear friends, this should not surprise us. This kind of un-Biblical compromise has been the history of the Billy Graham and Franklin Graham ministries. Both Billy Graham and Franklin Graham have a long record of extensive compromise with the Roman Catholic Church. They have included Catholic priests as counselors for people who come forward in their so-called evangelistic

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 6 of 14

campaigns. They refer those people back to Roman Catholic parishes for follow-up. Since these things are true of the Graham ministry, their current entry into the Evangelical romance with Mormonism should not surprise us. But it certainly should grieve us.

Mormon Missionaries On the March

Dear friends, we also live in a time when Mormon missionary efforts are multiplying in the United States and around the world. There are over 52,000 Mormon missionaries serving in over 340 Mormon missionary enterprises throughout the world. They have baptized over two million Mormon converts in the past ten years. And those convert statistics have been rising year-by-year for the last several years. Mormons are presenting themselves as another branch of Christianity, when in fact they are not.

The Essential Truth About Mormonism

What is the truth about Mormonism? The essential truth about Mormonism is that it is an un-Biblical, anti-Christian cult. Mormonism teaches that its "God" was once a man. Mormonism teaches that that this "God" is married to a goddess wife. Mormonism teaches that Jesus and Satan are both the "spirit children" of this so-called "God."

Mormonism denies salvation through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Mormonism teaches that each faithful Mormon man will be saved by his good

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 7 of 14

works, and that his reward will be to become the god of his own planet. And then, according to Mormon teaching, each faithful Mormon man will reign on that planet with his wife (or wives, according to some branches of Mormonism) and he will populate that planet by fathering "celestial children."

And dear friends, I can also tell you from first-hand experience that the ornate multimillion dollar Mormon temples around the world are perversions of the Biblical tabernacle. A number of years ago I had the opportunity to tour the Mormon Temple just outside of Washington D.C., before that temple was consecrated and then permanently closed to non-Mormons like me. I saw the elaborate furnishings of that temple first-hand, and I can testify to you that a Mormon temple is indeed a perversion of the Biblical tabernacle and temple. And we also understand from the testimony of a number of former Mormons who have left the church that they are sworn to secrecy concerning the pagan aspects of their temple ceremonies.

What is Mormonism's alleged authority for this thorough perversion of Christianity? Mormonism's authority is the word of man, not the Word of God. It is the word, first of all, of a so-called prophet named Joseph Smith. Mormons place the writings of Joseph Smith and other human writings in authority over Holy Scripture. They place their *Book of Mormon*, their book called the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the writings of other leaders, and also the ongoing pronouncements of the Mormon Council of Elders – they place all of these things in authority over the

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 8 of 14

Bible. The reality is, that Mormons have no real use for the Bible except to twist it to support their deviant teachings.

How Can So-Called Evangelicals Embrace Mormonism?

Now, since these things are true, how is it that many who call themselves Evangelicals – even prominent Evangelical leaders – how is it that they can suppress or deny the cultic nature of Mormonism? How is it that some of them are even calling members of the Mormon cult Christian brethren? The answer, dear friends, is this. We find it in the Word of God. It is because many self-described Evangelicals have become the kind of people that the Apostle Paul warned against in second Timothy chapter four, verses three and four. The Apostle Paul said this:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires... [they] will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Dear friends, that is what we are seeing today. But this is not the first time that professing believers have compromised with false religions. We find such compromise in the books of Kings, and the books of Chronicles. We see what happened in the nation of Israel. We find the kings of Israel, and the priests of Israel, compromising with the false religions around them and embracing their false gods. Let me read for you from second Kings chapter seventeen, beginning at verse fifteen:

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 9 of 14

And they rejected [the Lord's] statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them....Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight...[He sent them into captivity in Assyria].

We find the same kind of incipient compromise and apostasy even in the days of the early church. The epistles of Paul and James and Peter and John are filled with warnings and admonitions against compromise with those who served other gods, or who sought to mingle the beliefs and practices of other religions and philosophies with authentic Biblical Christianity.

And so dear friends these things are nothing new. In fact, if we go all the way back to the book of Genesis, in the days before the Flood, we find that spiritual conditions became so terrible that only Noah and his family stood against the tide of compromise and apostasy. But we read in Genesis chapter seven, verse one that "The Lord said to Noah, 'Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.' "

Dear friends, that ark was the only place of safety in a world that was about to experience sudden destruction. In this ministry, and on these broadcasts, we seek to point people to the eternal Ark of Safety which the Genesis ark symbolized. That

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 10 of 14

Ark is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word is the Christian's sole authority. The only place of safety, for time and for eternity, is to be in Christ and to stand upon the authority of His Word.

How Must Christians Confront Mormonism?

And so, dear friends, in this time when there seems to be such a lack of knowledge of the truth about Mormonism among believers generally, and such a denial and suppression of the truth about Mormonism by many who claim to be Evangelical leaders – in such a time as this, we must recognize this great danger, and we must take refuge in God's Word. Dear friend, what will you say, if you hear someone who professes to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ say that "Mormonism is not so bad," or that "we can cooperate with Mormons," or even perhaps say that Mormonism is a legitimate part of Christianity? What will you say? What will your answer be? And what will you say to the Mormon missionaries who come to your door?

Well, first and foremost, we must base whatever we say firmly upon the authority of Holy Scripture. We have no other authority, because there is no other authority. The Bible alone is the Word of God. The Bible is the only supernatural book. We must go to God's Word for all judgments, for all evaluations, for all answers.

In Isaiah chapter 8, the Lord told His people how to evaluate what any man or any woman says, who claims to speak for God. The Lord said this. He said, whenever anyone comes to you with a religious teaching, go "to the law and to the

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Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 11 of 14

testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." And in the book of First John chapter four, verse one, we are told this: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

And in Colossians chapter two beginning at verse eighteen, we read this warning:

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head [that is, to the Lord Jesus Christ], from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

And truly, that describes the Mormon religion. False humility. Worship of angels. Intruding into things which they have not seen. Vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds. Not holding fast to Christ. Not having any part in the true body of Christ, His true Church.

Dear friends, listen also to the words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter seven, beginning at verse thirteen. He said,

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 12 of 14

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. (And then notice this, verse 16.) You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

And then our Lord Jesus said this in the next verse:

Not everyone who says to me "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day [the Day of Judgment], "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Dear friends, we must test the spirits. We must put them to the test of the Word of God. We must compare what Mormonism says to God's own testimony in His own holy Word. We must understand the roots and the fruits of Mormonism. We must discern between a good tree that bears good fruit, and a bad tree that deserves only to be cut down and to be thrown into the fire. We must understand that many who use the name of Jesus Christ are not truly of Jesus Christ but are, in fact, of the Devil. That is certainly true of Mormonism.

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 13 of 14

How To Recognize a Counterfeit

And so, as we continue in this series of messages, we are going to ask critical questions, crucial questions, life and death questions, question that we must ask, and we must be able to answer, about the false religion of Mormonism.

Is Mormonism a Christian religion? What does Mormonism teach about the Bible? What does Mormonism teach about Jesus Christ? What does Mormonism teach about the Holy Spirit? What does Mormonism teach about the Trinity? What does Mormonism teach about the soul of man? What does Mormonism teach about sin and salvation? What does Mormonism teach about Hell?

These are the kinds of questions that we are going to ask and answer as we continue in this series. We are going to see what the Mormon church itself teaches on each of these points, and how those teachings compare with the Word of God.

If you have listened to these broadcasts for any length of time, you have probably heard me say something that I am going to dare to say once again in relation to Mormonism. I've used the illustration of people who work in a bank. The people who work in a bank need to be able to identify counterfeit money. And if you ask someone who works in a bank, "How do you do that? How are you able to identify that counterfeit \$20 or \$50 or \$100 bill when it comes into your hands?"

The answer will be, "I learned to recognize the counterfeit by intensively studying the genuine article. I know what a counterfeit looks like, because I have

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Evangelicals' Romance With Mormonism" (2 Timothy 4:3-4, Matthew 7:13-23)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/11/2012

Page 14 of 14

studied what the real thing looks like." And dear friends, that is what we are going to do. We are going to understand the nature of the Mormon counterfeit by comparing it to the genuine article – the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is that of the Great Commission: to preach the Gospel to the world, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

How You Can Help Us

Above all, please pray for us. The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to all we do. We thank you for bringing this ministry before the throne of grace.

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**May the Lord richly bless your personal study
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**