

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Mormonism's Evil Fiction" (1 Timothy 4:1-2, Deuteronomy 18:9-14)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/18/2012

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Today we continue our study of Christianity versus Mormonism. That is, indeed, the position – it is "Christianity *versus* Mormonism." We have already seen that Mormonism in no way deserves to be called Christian. As we continue today, and in the messages to come, the Lord willing, we are going see this truth even more vividly.

The Reason For This Series

Let me remind you again of the reason why we are broadcasting this series of messages at this time. We live in a time when Mormonism is not only spreading ever more rapidly among unbelievers, but Mormonism is also gaining a favorable status among growing numbers of those who claim to be Evangelical Christians. As we saw in our last message, for the last several years growing numbers of prominent Evangelical leaders have exhibited what we can only describe as a tragic lack of discernment regarding the false doctrines of Mormonism and the dangers of Mormonism.

We also live in a time when there is a lack of knowledge of the truth about Mormonism among Bible-believing Christians generally. And so we need to confront this problem. The way to confront this problem is to demonstrate the sharp differences, indeed the spiritual-life-and-death differences, between Mormonism and authentic Biblical Christianity.

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"Test the Spirits"

We saw in our last message, in the book of First John chapter four, verse one, this admonition: "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." We are to test the spirits. And this is not merely the job of the preacher. It is not merely the job of the church leadership. It is certainly their job. Pastors and church elders are to protect the flock of God from error.

But the job of testing the spirits is the job of every Bible-believing Christian. You will hear and read and see many things, both inside and outside the doors of a church, that you need to test. The word "test" in First John chapter four verse one is a word that in the original language means to examine something carefully, to evaluate the genuineness of something, and to only recognize it as genuine, and treat it as genuine, and embrace it as genuine, if it passes the Biblical test.

And so, we must put Mormonism to the test of the Word of God. We must compare what Mormonism says to God's own testimony in His holy Word. The Bible is our sole authority. We have no other authority, because there is no other authority. The Bible alone is the Word of God. And so today, we shall begin to put Mormonism to the test.

You may ask, How are we going to do that? Well in this message, and in the messages to come, we are going to ask a series of essential questions. Many books have been written about Mormonism. Some of these books go into great detail

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about the history of Mormonism, and about the character of the men who founded the Mormon cult and the men who have subsequently led the Mormon cult for past 190 years. And those things are not unimportant. And we are going to touch upon some of those things in today's message and the messages to come.

But you do not need to become an expert on all of the minutiae of Mormonism, an expert on all of the complex web of details about Mormonism, in order to understand how wrong it is and how dangerous it is. All we need to do is to ask and answer essential questions about the nature of Mormonism and its teachings, and compare the answers with the Bible.

The first essential question we must ask is this: What does Mormonism teach about the Bible? We must understand the answer to this question in order to see whether or not Mormonism has a valid standard of truth.

God's Commands Concerning Scripture

We must begin, then, by seeing what Mormonism's attitude is toward God's own commands concerning Scripture. Now, we find four specific commandments or declarations from God in which He tells us how we are to approach and to regard His Word, the Bible. In Deuteronomy chapter four and again in Deuteronomy chapter twelve, in Proverbs chapter thirty, and in Revelation chapter twenty-two, God commands that no man shall add to His Word or take away from His Word. In Isaiah chapter eight beginning at verse nineteen, God commands that no one who claims to speak in His name may speak anything that contradicts His

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Word. And in John chapter ten verse thirty-five, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself tells us that "the Scriptures cannot be broken."

The word for "broken" in John 10:35 is a word that is used in a number of passages in the New Testament to denote physical disassembly or destruction. In context, what Jesus is saying in John 10:35 is that the Scriptures cannot be broken in the sense of being taken apart. You cannot deconstruct that which has been compacted and built together by God in His Word. You cannot, you must not, take that which God has placed into a coherent and unified whole and treat it in a way that would destroy that fundamental integrity. Man has no authority to do this. If man does do this, by definition he is seeking to break Scripture. He is seeking to subvert it, or to invalidate it, or to deprive it of its authority.

Dear friends, because this is so important, let me repeat these four commandments of God concerning Scripture. You must not add to it. You must not take away from it. You must not contradict it. You must not undermine it. In every case, God pronounces His curse upon those who do these things.

But as we test Mormonism against God's commandments concerning Holy Scripture, we find that Mormonism violates all of them.

Mormonism Adds to Scripture

Mormonism adds to Holy Scripture. The Mormons have added three other books to the body of what they call "authorized Scripture". They have added the

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Book of Mormon. They have added another book by Joseph Smith called the *Pearl of Great Price*. They have added yet another book called the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Mormonism Takes Away From Scripture

Mormonism also takes away from Holy Scripture. The Mormon church has its own edition of the King James Bible. And in their version of the King James Bible, they have added numerous footnotes which both add to and take away from Holy Scripture. In the book of Revelation, for example, they have included no fewer than forty-five footnotes where Joseph Smith added to and took away from the words of the book of Revelation. And these footnotes are identified as being the "Joseph Smith translation".

In fact, these footnotes are not translations at all. They are changes to the text of the Bible in order to bring God's Word in line with Mormon theology. Dear friends, what kind of audacity is this, to change the very words of God, to twist the words of God, in order to conform them to that which Scripture plainly calls "doctrines of demons."

In First Timothy chapter four beginning at verse one, we read this: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron..." That certainly describes the

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depraved attitude of Joseph Smith and his followers up until the present day toward the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God.

So dear friend, if Mormon missionaries come to your door with a Bible in their hands that says that it is the King James Version of the Bible, keep in mind that it is not the King James Bible with which Bible-believing Christians are familiar. It is a perversion and a distortion of that faithful translation of Scripture.

Mormonism Contradicts Scripture

And so we have seen that Mormonism adds to Scripture, and takes away from Scripture. We also find that Mormonism openly contradicts Holy Scripture. Mormonism teaches that there are many gods, and not one true and living God as the Bible teaches. In the next message in this series, the Lord willing, we are going to examine the Mormon doctrine of "God" in more detail.

Mormons also teach that their founder Joseph Smith and another man named Oliver Cowdery were inducted into the Aaronic priesthood by John the Baptist in May of 1829. But the book of Hebrews makes it absolutely clear that the priesthood of Aaron was long ago finished. It was a type and symbol of the high priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The priests of Aaron's line could not take away sin forever. Jesus Christ, who the book of Hebrews tells us is a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" and not of the order of Aaron, Jesus did what the priests of Aaron's line could not do by offering His own perfect blood as the full and final atonement for sin. And in so doing, the book of Hebrews tells us,

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Jesus did away with the priesthood of Aaron forever. For the Mormons to say that the priesthood of Aaron has been reinstated through Joseph Smith is blasphemy against the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And even worse than this, Mormonism teaches that the priesthood of Melchizedek – the priesthood of Christ – was conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery through the ministration of Peter, James, and John, in that same period in the 1800s, shortly after John the Baptist supposedly inducted them into the priesthood of Aaron.

According to the Mormon book called the *Doctrine and Covenants*, there is no distinction between the priesthood of Aaron and the priesthood of Melchizedek. And they say that through this priesthood alone, the officials of the Mormon church alone speak and act in the name of God for the salvation of humanity.

Dear friend, if you have even the most basic understanding of the Word of God, if you read and understand the plain and straightforward sense of the teachings that we find in the New Testament, you will understand that all of these teachings of Mormonism, and so many others that we cannot begin to deal with, all of these things violate the clear command of God not to contradict His holy Word. The men of Mormonism, and the other books that they call "scripture" but are not Holy Scripture, these men and these books openly contradict the plain teachings of the Bible.

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Mormonism Seeks to "Break" Scripture

And through all of this – by adding to God's Word, by taking away from God's Word, by contradicting God's Word, Mormonism seeks to "break" Holy Scripture. Mormonism seeks to destroy the fundamental integrity of the Word of God. Mormonism subverts the Word of God. Mormonism seeks to deprive the Word of God of its rightful and unique authority.

Mormonism, like every other cultish religion, seeks to take the authority that God reserves for Himself alone and for His Word alone and to place that authority – the authority to say what is true and what is not true – in the hands of sinful men, men who claim the name of Jesus Christ, men who claim to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, but they are men to whom Jesus will say on the Day of Judgment, "I never knew you; depart from Me..." (Matthew 7:23).

Now dear friends, I have only mentioned a handful of examples of Mormonism's open disregard for the authority of the Word of God. But even these few examples are enough to condemn Mormonism. And we find that Mormonism is further condemned as we look at the character of the man who wrote its basic teachings, and the claims that he made, and the content of that which he wrote.

Joseph Smith and the Occult

Let me first say a few things that are well known and well established facts about the character of the alleged prophet Joseph Smith. This man was actually

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named Joseph Smith, Jr. His father, Joseph Smith, Sr., was a mystic, and he spent a great deal of his time digging for imaginary buried treasure in the state of New York where he lived. Joseph Smith, Jr. followed in his father's footsteps. It is well documented that Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of Mormonism, engaged in occult beliefs and practices. In his treasure seeking activities, he employed divining rods, magic charms, and other implements of ritual magic.

Joseph Smith, Jr. owned what was called in that time a "peep stone" or "seer stone." This kind of stone was an implement that was used by those who engaged in occult practices to supposedly see things that others could not see. Joseph Smith claimed that he used a "peep stone" or "seer stone" to translate the *Book of Mormon*.

Joseph Smith claimed that the last prophet who contributed to the book, a man named Moroni, buried the golden plates on which this book was supposedly engraved in a hillside in the present-day state of New York. Smith claimed that Moroni returned to Earth in the year 1827 as an angel, and revealed the location of the *Book of Mormon* to Joseph Smith and gave him instructions for translating it. And as I mentioned a moment ago, Smith said that he used this occult device called a "peep stone" to make that alleged translation.

Now, dear friends, I must tell you that the story of how the *Book of Mormon* came into existence is very questionable. But Joseph Smith's engagement in occult practices is not questionable, it is documented fact.

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In the early years of the history of the United States, it was very common for state and local governments to make illegal in secular law things that God has condemned in Scripture. And this was true in the state of New York in the early 1800s. And so Joseph Smith was actually charged in a civil court in New York with engaging in the occult practice that was called "glass looking," which was another way of saying that someone employed a device like a peep stone or a seer stone. There are historical court documents that testify to the fact that Joseph Smith was convicted of this offense, and he paid a fine for his offense. Joseph Smith's own father also testified to the fact that his son engaged in fortune-telling.

Dear friends, these are things that the God of the Bible condemns. Listen to the words that God spoke to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy chapter eighteen, as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. God said,

When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who...practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist... For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

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Clearly, Mormonism at its very beginnings had associations with those who engaged in occult practices – Joseph Smith and others. The founder of this false cult engaged in things that are detestable in the sight of God. God calls them abominations. In Revelation chapter twenty-two, God declares that no "sorcerer" – no person who engages in any sort of occult practice without repenting – will enter the New Jerusalem. Revelation chapter twenty-one tells us that all unrepentant sorcerers "shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The Book of Mormon: Evil Fiction

Let me also say a few words about the content of the *Book of Mormon*. The *Book of Mormon* claims to be the history of two ancient civilizations, which it claims were located in the Americas. It claims that the first of these great civilizations left the Tower of Babel and came to the Western Hemisphere. But this first North American civilization, so says the *Book of Mormon*, was later destroyed.

The *Book of Mormon* also claims that a second group of people, Jewish exiles, left Jerusalem about 600 B.C., before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. Mormon tradition says that this group of people crossed the Pacific Ocean and landed on the west coast of South America. The *Book of Mormon* claims that these people were Jews, and that these people were later divided into two warring factions, and that one of these warring factions received

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a curse because of their evil deeds, and that curse took the form of dark skin. These people, according to Mormon teaching, were the forebears of the American Indians. The *Book of Mormon* also claims that in the 400s A.D. these forebears of the American Indians annihilated the other group, the so-called "white Jews" who had allegedly come to the Americas a thousand years earlier.

Now, until recent decades, the *Book of Mormon* described the curse which it claims resulted in the dark skin of American Indians in these words. It says that "they were [once] white, and exceeding fair and delightsome; [so] that they might not be an enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them" (2 Nephi 5:21). However, since the 1980s, revised editions of the *Book of Mormon* have deleted such words – and there are many such statements casting aspersions on both American Indians and natives of Africa, and stating the supremacy of white people over dark-skinned people, even stating that white people are inherently "righteous" while American Indians and Africans are inherently "unrighteous" according to Mormon teachings.

This is completely contrary to the teaching of Scripture which says that there is no difference based on ethnicity or nationality, but that all men "have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and are eternally lost apart from saving faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and when they are saved, they all become one body in Christ.

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Dear friends, there is not even the tiniest shred of archaeological evidence to support any of the claims of the *Book of Mormon* concerning ancient migrations from the Middle East to North and South America. Nothing. It is all fiction.

Mormonism Fails the Test

Well dear friends, we could say much more about these things. But even this very brief examination of the underlying basis of Mormonism, and the Mormon attitude toward Holy Scripture, demonstrates that Mormonism has no relationship to authentic Biblical Christianity.

"Test the spirits," God says, to determine "whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." Mormonism fails the test in every way. Mormonism is opposed to the God of the Bible, opposed to the authority of the God of the Bible, and has its roots in the occult. The *Book of Mormon* and the other writings that the Mormons claim to be "Scripture" alongside the sixty-six books of the Bible – these things cannot be considered genuine or authoritative for even a single moment.

This fact is going to be reinforced for us as we continue our examination of Mormonism on our next broadcast. As I said at the beginning of this broadcast, you do not need to become an expert on all of the details of Mormonism in order to understand how wrong it is and how dangerous it is. All you need to do is compare Mormonism to Scripture.

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Today we have asked and answered the first essential question: What does Mormonism teach about the Bible? And we have seen that the Mormon religion has no valid standard of truth. And in our next program, we are going to ask and answer a second essential question: What does Mormonism teach about God? About God the Father? About Jesus Christ? About the Holy Spirit? About the Trinity? And dear friends, we are going to see, ever more clearly as we go along, how bizarre and how blasphemous are the teachings of the Mormon cult. So I hope you will join us next time.

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.

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