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Understanding Mormonism: Week 2

Last week we addressed the importance of following Jesus’ example when declaring the gospel. Our desire for discussion, our interest for interaction must be motivated by His love working within us. When His love is present, when we are aligned with His word, His grace will be evident.

Our commission is to *“Go therefore and make disciples...”* (Matt. 28:19) which covers our city, country, continent and beyond. Beginning in our city, pray for opportunity to reach those who do not know Jesus. Pray for words to share, for boldness to speak and to have His unpretentious love for the people He connects you with;

“And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11

In order to be His hand extended we must align with His heart which is reflected in Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* Jesus approached the religious ‘lost’ with compassion, mercy and truth. May He guide us also as we take His truth into our world.

Last week we looked at who God is and this week we will identify some of the critical differences between Biblical truth and LDS beliefs concerning Jesus:

Who is Jesus?

2 Corinthians 11:3, 4 and Galatians 1:6-9 speak of those who will come and preach another gospel and *“preach another Jesus...”* As we will see from the facts below, the LDS teach and speak of another Jesus:

“The traditional Christ of whom they [evangelical Christians] speak is not the Christ of whom I speak. For the Christ of whom I speak has been revealed in this the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. He together with His Father, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the year 1820, and when Joseph left the grove that day, he knew more of the nature of God than all the learned ministers of the gospel of the ages. Gordon B. Hinckley, LDS Church News, June 20, 1998, p. 7

LDS teaching about Jesus:

- a. Jesus is a man who has, through obedience to the Father's plan, risen to be a god.
 - i. "Jesus became a God and reached His great state of understanding through consistent effort and continuous obedience to all the Gospel truths and universal laws." Milton Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, pg.51. Also read *Teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith* by Joseph Fielding Smith, pg. 373.
- b. Jesus is a spirit brother to Lucifer.
 - i. "The appointment of Jesus to be Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of Mankind. Milton Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, 1945, pg.15 Additional: Pg. 379, 'devils', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, BYU.
- c. Jesus in His pre-mortal existence was the mightiest of all spirit children. He presented a plan of salvation for earth which the Father accepted. Lucifer also presented a plan and it was rejected and he then came to earth.
 - i. "The firstborn of God volunteered to implement the plan of salvation. Lucifer, who was also a son of the Father came forward with a counterproposal" Vol.3, *Premortal life*, Pg. 1124, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, BYU.
- d. Jesus was not born of a virgin but was born through the same natural action as any man. (The Father had relations w/Mary when she was betrothed to Joseph)
 - i. "When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost." *Journal of Discourses*, Vol.1, pg. 50, additionally Vol.8, pg. 115
- e. Jesus' shed blood was not enough to save some.
 - i. "Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone, as far as possible, in their behalf. This is scriptural doctrine, and is taught in all the standard works of the Church" *Doctrines of Salvation by Joseph F. Smith*, vol. 1, Pg. 135.

What the Bible teaches-

- a. Jesus is God and came as a man to save people from their sins.
 - i. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" John 1:1,14. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" Matthew 1:21
 - ii. Additional reference: Colossians 1:16, 1John 5:20, 1 Timothy 3:16, Revelation 19:13

- b. Jesus is Creator, Lucifer/Satan is a created being, not a “spirit-brother”.
 - i. *“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”* Colossians 1:16
- c. Jesus is God.
 - i. His existence prior to His incarnation was as God, not learning and progressing to be God. John 1:1, Colossians 1:16, *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”* 1 Timothy 1:17
- d. Jesus was born of a virgin, Mary, and conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. *...Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit”* Matthew 1:20 also see Luke 1:26-35.
- e. Jesus blood is sufficient and adequate for all who will believe (trust) in Him.
 - i. *“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”* Romans 10:13, *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”* Acts 2:21, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness”* 1 John 1:9

How do we reach our LDS friends, families, those in our area of impact? Consider the following elements for effective witness:

The definition dilemma- Realize that in conversation you may be using the same words but they have different meanings. Ask questions, speak clearly, and define what you mean. Familiarize yourself with their definitions as much as possible. Read examples from “Witness to Mormons”

Respect- Jesus faced opposition from many different areas; religious, social, political, even resistance among His disciples (John 6:60-71). Consistently He spoke the truth without mocking or deriding the individual and He respected them enough to address difficult issues.

Sincerity-(Freedom from hypocrisy, disguise or false pretense). Effective witness requires a consistent, hypocrisy free witness. Share the gospel because you care for and love the people who are lost! Check your heart, if you are out to prove them wrong you will probably just argue.

Truth- Jesus said the *“truth shall make you free... therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”*

Don’t be drawn off track, stick with the important issues such as we have reviewed; Who God is, Who Jesus is, How can I be saved, Who can be saved. Next week we will look at “salvation” and the differences between what the Bible teaches compared to what LDS beliefs teach.

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