

THE MORMON CONCEPT OF MODERN-DAY  
REVELATION REFUTED

by  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Master of Theology in  
Grace Theological Seminary  
May 1982



Title: THE MORMON CONCEPT OF MODERN-DAY REVELATION  
REFUTED  
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Degree: Master of Theology  
Date: May 1982  
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The need for continuing revelation is a cornerstone of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Modern-day apostles and prophets are also needed to obtain such revelations, according to Mormon teaching. The first part of chapter one of this thesis examines the Mormon belief of revelation. This cult teaches that prophets have been needed throughout history to receive revelation, and apostles have been necessary to administer Christ's church. This church ceased to exist when the Apostles of Christ died. Thus, for there to be a true church today, apostles and prophets are expedient, according to the Mormon system.

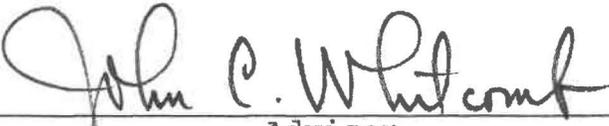
In answering this teaching, an examination of Old and New Testament prophets is undertaken in the second section of chapter one. A prophet in Scripture was essentially a spokesman of God, giving information God wanted men to know. Moses, in Deuteronomy 13 and 18, gave certain guidelines by which Israel could know true prophets from false ones. These guidelines say, in essence: new revelation does not contradict old revealed information from God. This principle is true in reference to New Testament prophets as well, who were very much like their Old Testament counterparts.

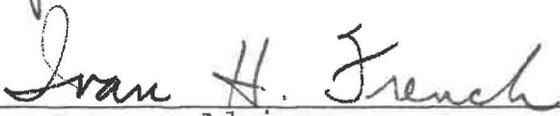
The New Testament apostles had certain requirements that are presented in Acts one. An apostle had to accompany Jesus from his baptism to his ascension. This being the case, the concept of apostolic succession, which the Mormons support, does not exist in Scripture.

Ephesians 2:20, in regard to both New Testament apostles and prophets, teaches that both were foundational to the infant church of Christ, but once their purpose was accomplished, they were no longer necessary. The church of Jesus Christ did not cease, but living stones have been added to it since the time of Christ, even to today. Thus, Mormon teaching in regard to prophets and apostles is not true.

In chapter two, Mormonism's error is demonstrated by its refusal to accept the principle that new revelation cannot contradict old. Its gospel evidences that one is saved by a cooperative effort between himself and God. The Christology of Mormonism is also defective since Christ, in this system, had a beginning and his incarnation was not the holy event as explained in the Bible. Mormon writings thus add different information to what has been given by God to man. This writer then concludes that the entire system of Mormonism is false.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary  
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## INTRODUCTION

Over one hundred and fifty years ago a man in western New York State told a story of God the Father and His Son appearing to him when he was a fourteen year old boy. From the humble beginnings of six members, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) has grown until today their membership numbers over four and one half million.

The growth of this cult<sup>1</sup> is not the only astonishing aspect of Mormonism. Two others are: (1) the manner in which it treats the Word of God, and (2) its concept of the Bible as being insufficient for the follower of Christ. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, recorded that the Bible was not enough Scripture. Since God is the God of all nations, more than one Bible is needed to speak to all of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This thesis defines a cult as ". . . a religious group which claims authority by Christ and the Bible but neglects or distorts the gospel, the central message of the Savior and the Scripture" (Gordon R. Lewis, Confronting the Cults [Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974], p. 3).

<sup>2</sup>This thought is in the Book of Mormon (hereinafter B of M) 2 Nephi 29:3-10 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961). An interesting question arises out of the use of the English word "Bible." 2 Nephi was supposedly written between 559 and 545 B.C. If that is true and if Smith was merely translating the B of M, how did an English word that was not in use find its way into a book that was written before its time?

The Mormon Articles of Faith numbers seven and nine state:

We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

As is evident, the Mormons embrace a position that allows for further revelation from God--revelation that is to be considered as Scripture.

The purpose of this thesis is to exhibit the fact that the Mormon concept of modern-day revelation and related topics is not correct when examined in the light of Scripture. Questions that will be examined are: What are the Mormon ideas of a prophet and an apostle? Are these two types of people needed today? What does the term "revelation" mean to a Mormon? What part does the Holy Spirit have in revelation and inspiration? Does he have other roles? If so, what are they?

The methodology of this thesis will be to parallel the Mormon beliefs about these questions with some pertinent biblical concepts which will explain wherein the Mormons are in error. The major divisions are: (1) a comparison of the need for modern-day revelation and (2) a

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<sup>1</sup>James E. Talmage, A Study of the Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977), p. 2.

comparison of the messages of Mormon literature with the Bible. Only verses which are found in the Bible and are used by Mormons to defend their doctrines will be examined in this thesis.

## CHAPTER I

### THE NEED FOR MODERN-DAY REVELATION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has consistently maintained since its inception that there has been and continues to be a need for direct revelation from God. What do the spokesmen of this cult mean when they discuss the topic of continuous revelation? To what Bible verses do these spokesmen appeal in an attempt to prove their point? Why is modern-day revelation necessary? Why are apostles and prophets necessary today? An examination of Mormonism's concept of revelation with its various aspects is required.

#### The Mormon Mandate for Modern-day Revelation

It is expedient to define the terms Mormons use when speaking about revelation. The areas that need to be investigated are: (1) a general overview of revelation in the Mormon church and (2) the need for revelation today.

#### A Definition of Mormon Revelation

In a theological sense, the term revelation signifies the making known of divine truth by communication from

the heavens.<sup>1</sup> This is the frequently used definition of the LDS church for revelation. Every member of the Mormon church who has been baptized and received the gift of the Holy Spirit is entitled to receive revelation.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this act is necessary for salvation in the Mormon system.<sup>3</sup>

#### A Testimony

This is a hard-to-explain experience which is basically obtaining knowledge revealed by the Holy Spirit that Christ is divine and the Mormon gospel is true.<sup>4</sup> Further, a testimony, according to Mormonism, produces repentance and obedience if one's testimony is strong enough.<sup>5</sup> To quote a Mormon "apostle":

You cannot describe a testimony to someone. No one can really know what a testimony is--the feeling and joy and the rejoicing and the happiness that comes into the heart of a man when he gets one--except another

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<sup>1</sup>James E. Talmage, The Articles of Faith (hereinafter called A. of F.) (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977), p. 296.

<sup>2</sup>James E. Faust, "Communion with the Holy Spirit," Ensign 10 (May 1980):12.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 647.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 785-86. See also Gospel Principles (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), p. 359; and Spencer W. Kimball, "Revelation," an unpublished address given at the Brigham Young University State Conference (Sunday, January 13, 1957), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Marion G. Romney, "Issue: Meaning of Conversion" in Living Prophets for a Living Church (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974), p. 122.

person who has received a testimony. Some things can be known only by revelation.<sup>1</sup>

There are also guidelines to follow to enable one to be a recipient of revelation,<sup>2</sup> and instructions to Mormons to make it possible to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in all of this revelatory activity.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, to the Mormons, a testimony is revelatory in nature, difficult to explain, but impossible to be "saved" without. Each Mormon is entitled to receive a testimony which convinces him that the Mormon doctrines are true. Once one has this testimony with its accompanying gift of the Holy Spirit, it is then quite certain that he can receive personal revelations.<sup>4</sup>

#### Personal revelation

This aspect of Mormon doctrine is that which enables a good "Saint" to live his daily life with the decisions

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike Unto God" in Follow the Brethren (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1980), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Faust, "Communion with the Holy Spirit," p. 14. See also McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 383.

<sup>3</sup>A section examining the work of the Holy Spirit in the area of inspiration will be in a following chapter.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Smith said "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (hereinafter referred to as Teachings), compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977), p. 328.

that one necessarily must make. "Latter-day Saints, . . . are entitled to personal inspiration in the small events of life as well as when they are confronted with the giant Goliaths of life."<sup>1</sup> Revelation comes to each individual member of the Mormon church for all facets of life.<sup>2</sup> One reason for this possibility is to save the church leaders time and energy. The individual Mormons are expected to get their own personal revelation (since they have the gift of the Holy Ghost) rather than running to high church leaders to be told what to do.<sup>3</sup>

But these personal revelations are limited in authority, for direction of the Mormon church revelation is limited to a select few.

#### Revelation for the Mormon Church

While individual Saints may receive revelation for their own lives, they may not receive any for the church unless they have some position of authority within the church structure.

Every person properly appointed and sustained (by those in authority over the church) to act in an official capacity in the church is entitled to the spirit of revelation to guide the particular organization or group over which he presides.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Faust, "Communion with the Holy Spirit," p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 645.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 646.

Thus, those in authority over a ward (local church) would receive revelation for only that sphere. This would continue up the ladder of authority to the president of the Mormon church. There is then ". . . only one man upon the earth who receives revelation for the whole Church."<sup>1</sup>

But the mastery of the Mormon prophet penetrates to more areas than moral and religious. "The prophet can receive revelation on any matter--temporal or spiritual."<sup>2</sup> It is possible then that the prophet of the Mormon church could give the will of God in regard to where one works or how one votes.<sup>3</sup> In fact, this concept is the test by which a Mormon may know whether a revelation is true or false. "There is only one man in this church, at a time, who has the right to receive revelation for the Church" (emphasis his).<sup>4</sup> Anyone else who would purport to have revelations for the LDS church is summarily judged as false.

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<sup>1</sup>Faust, "Communion with the Holy Spirit," p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ezra Taft Benson, "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets" in Following the Brethren (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1980), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>The influence of the latter realm was effectively done in the early nineteen hundreds. See Frank J. Cannon, Under the Prophet in Utah (Boston: The C. M. Clark Publishing Company, 1911; reprinted ed. Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, n.d.), pp. 159-300.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrine of Salvation, Vol. I, compiled by Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), p. 285.

## The Need for Modern-day Revelation

### According to the Mormons

This section will examine the reasons for and the proof of a present day need for revelation from God that the Latter-day Saints use to bolster their claims.

There are two basic Mormon teachings that address the need for revelation today. The apostasy of the Church of Jesus Christ around A.D. 100 and the necessity of apostles and prophets to direct the church through revelation were these two teachings. This section will not deal with the total span of Mormon ecclesiology, but will be limited to a study of the church in relation to modern-day revelation.

### The Apostasy of the Church

Mormons teach that the church begun by Christ was actually a restored church which had its beginning with Adam.<sup>1</sup> They equate the Church with the Kingdom by quoting from Joseph Smith's writings.<sup>2</sup> After Christ restored his church and organized it with the necessary twelve apostles, he went to heaven, leaving the Twelve in charge. The Mormons believe that as long as there were apostles and prophets as the foundation of the church, the edifice would

<sup>1</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>Doctrines and Covenants, 65; 84:34; 136:41; hereinafter referred to as D and C (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968), also 1 Nephi 4: 26 in the B. of M.

endure.<sup>1</sup> But if they died with no replacements, the church would cease to exist because revelation had ceased also to exist. The church's foundation is not only apostles and prophets, but more exactly, revelation.<sup>2</sup> Without revelation, the true church of any age would cease according to Mormon teaching.

Thus,

Following the death of the apostles, revelation ceased. The authority of God was no longer among men. Christianity sickened and died.<sup>3</sup>

#### The need for prophets and apostles

As has been mentioned, the need for apostles and prophets in the true church is crucial according to Mormon

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<sup>1</sup>Apostasy and Restoration (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, "Revelation" (Unpublished paper given at the Brigham Young University State Conference, Sunday, January 13, 1957), p. 2. See also LeGrand Richards, "Prophets and Prophecy," Ensign 5 (November 1975): 50-52. The verse appealed to the most is Matt 16:18. The "rock" the Mormons believe refers to revelation, specifically the "testimony" Peter gave about Christ, i.e., he was the Son of God. This verse will be examined later in the biblical response.

<sup>3</sup>Apostasy and Restoration, p. 8. Mark E. Peterson, Which Church is Right? (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974), p. 9, states that the Apostle John was taken out of the ministry around A.D. 101 because wickedness had taken over the church, doctrines were changed, sin became open among members of the church. Church members denied aspects of the faith and the true doctrine of God was lost. The loss of John caused the church to drift since it was without any general authorities (apostles), and without a central authority, the church died away.

Verses used to prove this apostasy are usually: Matt 24:9-12; Gal 1:6-8; 2 Thess 2:1-12; 2 Pet 2:1-2.

teaching. It is necessary then to examine the Mormon teaching concerning the two groups since the need for these groups is tied closely with the reception of revelation.

### Prophets

The Mormon church delights in pointing to Amos 3:7 as proof for the need of prophets in any age. This verse states, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."<sup>1</sup> According to an LDS leader, this means:

. . . that no honest person believing in the holy scriptures could look to find God's eternal truth upon the earth without a prophet at its head, because we have no record that he has ever had a church or a movement without a prophet.<sup>2</sup>

A prophet is necessary to the Mormon system for revelation because he is God's representative on earth.<sup>3</sup> God does nothing without prophets who have a testimony of Christ. Therefore, prophets of the Old Testament variety are needed in the restored church Christ organized and in any other true sect. To further cement this interpretation, an appeal is made to 2 Peter 1:19 and Ephesians 4:11-14. Second Peter is invoked because the "more sure word of prophecy" proves that the will and mind of God can be known

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<sup>1</sup>All scriptural quotes are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise.

<sup>2</sup>LeGrand Richards, "Why a Prophet," in Living Prophets for a Living Church (Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1974), p. 179.

<sup>3</sup>Gospel Principles (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), p. 43.

only through one who prophesies: a prophet.<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 4, along with chapter 2, is appealed to demonstrate that the church Jesus Christ reestablished was built on the same revelatory foundation as that on which the Old Testament was founded.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, any church that was true would have prophets to receive revelation from God in order to guide the direction of the church.

### Apostles

An apostle is one who, according to Mormon teaching, . . . is a special witness of the name of Christ who is sent to teach the principles of salvation to others. He is one who knows of the divinity of the Savior by personal revelation and who is appointed to bear testimony to the world of what the Lord has revealed to him.<sup>3</sup>

Another aspect of their work is to administer in the total church. This they are able to accomplish because they hold the keys of an organization called the priesthood.<sup>4</sup> In one of their recognized works is recorded further information concerning the office of apostles.

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<sup>1</sup>Richards, "Why a Prophet?", p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Apostasy and Restoration, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 3, p. 125ff. The Priesthood in the Mormon Church is the hierarchy of authority. The president is the final authority and his desires are carried out by those under him within the priesthood. The keys were given to Peter by Christ (Matt 16:19) and are now within the Mormon Church, specifically the President. See Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977), pp. 136,142.

The Twelve (Apostles) are a Traveling Presiding High Council to officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the President of the Church, agreeable to the institution of heaven; to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations  
 . . .<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the function of an apostle within the Mormon church is to be a witness of Christ and to administer his church. The offices of Apostles and Prophets are needed today to maintain the true church of Christ according to Mormon doctrine. But because of the death of the twelve apostles and the apostasy of the church, these offices ceased, and revelation was withdrawn into heaven.

What was the solution? What was to be done to restore the true church on the earth?

#### The Mormon Solution

The Mormon founder did concoct a solution which has been faithfully taught to Mormons for more than 150 years. The resolving of the problem of the lack of a true church included two basic aspects: (1) the restoration of the true church through Joseph Smith, and (2) the reinstating of apostolic succession.

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<sup>1</sup>D and C, 107:33.

## Restoration of the Mormon Church

The church that ceased to exist after a "Great Apostasy" which was foretold,<sup>1</sup> was restored in 1830 through the work of a man who received the necessary authority from heaven to receive revelation. The Bible verses that are pointed to that prove that a restoration of all things, including the Gospels, prophets, and apostles and the church are necessary are: Amos 3:7, to display the timeless need for prophets to give revelation; Acts 3:19-21, to explain that there was to be restoration and it was to be prior to Christ's second coming; Revelation 14:6, to exhibit the restoration of the Gospel; and 2 Peter 1:19-21, which is one basis of receiving a testimony that the Gospel as restored is true.

Thus, through one man the true church of Jesus Christ was restored after over 1700 years of non-existence.

## Apostolic Succession

The requirement to have a man in authority on the earth at all times produced the solution of a type of apostolic succession within the Mormon leadership.

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<sup>1</sup>Talmage (A. of F., pp. 202-3) uses verses such as 2 Thess 2:3,4,5; 2 Pet 2:1-2; and 1 John 2:18 to prove that there would be an apostasy of the church. This was a complete falling away of the church, that in fact ceased to exist in any sense of the word on the earth. See also Apostasy and Restoration, pp. 4-8. The restoration was assisted by such events of history as the Reformation, the Renaissance and the Constitution of the United States. Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. I, pp. 174-183.

There are usually fourteen apostles in the Mormon organization. Two counselors, along with the prophet, form the presidency of the church and twelve apostles compose the Quorum of the Twelve. At this time of writing, there are fifteen; one new counselor was added to the presidency and the twelve. The twelve apostles fall in rank by seniority from the president of the Quorum of the Twelve down to the apostle who has the least amount of time in that body. Apostolic succession in the Mormon church is carried out by seniority. The apostles are ". . . to be brought into use if and when circumstances allow, all ordained to leadership in their turn as they move forward in seniority."<sup>1</sup> There is always a prophet on earth. When President Harold B. Lee passed away in 1973, the following was mentioned about Spencer Kimball, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve and next in seniority.

At the moment he (Lee) passed . . . Spencer W. Kimball was at that moment in complete charge and had total direction (of the Church) . . . As the last heartbeat of President Lee ceased, the mantle of leadership passed to President Kimball, whose next heartbeat was that of the living oracle and presiding authority of God on earth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," in Living Prophets for a Living Church (Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1974), p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, "Succession in the Presidency," in Living Prophets for a Living Church, p. 194. Kimball also stated "The matter of seniority is basic in the first quorums of the Church. All the apostles understand this perfectly, and all well-trained members of the Church are conversant with this perfect succession program." "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," p. 175.

To prove the necessity of a succession of apostles and prophets, Mormons use verses such as Ephesians 2:20, which means to the Mormons that the church must have the offices of apostles and prophets to be a church. Ephesians 4:1-11 is used to prove that the principle of apostolic succession was continually needed, and verses in Acts 1, 13 and 14 prove that the early church replaced the apostles who had died with new men.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

It has been demonstrated that the Mormon church demands a need for apostles and prophets and thus for revelation to direct its church. Also, the means used to acquire these offices is Apostolic Succession.

### The Need for Modern-day Revelation

#### According to the Bible

To understand the biblical concept of revelation, it is necessary to examine those men through whom God revealed information he wanted to give to the world. The King James Version (KJV) is accepted by the Mormon church ". . . as the foremost of her standard works, first among the books which have been proclaimed as her written guides in faith and doctrine."<sup>1</sup> The severity of the differences between Mormon writings and the Bible (KJV) will be examined

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<sup>1</sup>See Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 3, p. 153, and Peterson, Which Church is Right?, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Talmage, A. of F., p. 236.

in the following pages, and thus it will be revealed how scripturally aligned the Mormon doctrines are with the Word of God ". . . which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet 1:23).

The Mormon leadership has stated that many things have been left out of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is also written by a Mormon apostle that if a prophet ". . . says something that contradicts what is found in the standard church works (the Bible included), . . ., you may know by that same token that it is false, regardless of the position of the man who says it."<sup>2</sup> So, do the standard works of the Mormon Church agree with each other? Does the Bible agree with Mormon "Scripture"?

The material which follows will examine (1) prophets and apostles in relation to revelation and (2) the Mormon contention of an apostasy of the true church of Jesus Christ. While the King James Version of the Bible will be used, the Hebrew and Greek texts will be used as well.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 236-37.

<sup>2</sup>Harold B. Lee, "The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer and Revelation" in Living Prophets for a Living Church, p. 192.

A Survey of Prophets and Apostles  
In Regard to Revelation

The Old Testament Prophet

Old Testament prophets were recipients of revelation from God.<sup>1</sup> They were spokesmen for God.<sup>2</sup> To discover the content of the word "prophet," some pertinent Bible verses in the Old Testament need to be examined.

Genesis 20:7 is the first occurrence of the word. It mentioned that Abraham was a prophet. The second usage explains the meaning of prophet in a much fuller sense.

A Prophet As a Messenger

Exodus 7:1 is the second usage of the word נְבִיא .<sup>3</sup> The verse reads: "And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharoah; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" ( נְבִיא ). Exodus 4:15,18 helps to explain

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<sup>1</sup>Edward J. Young, My Servant the Prophets (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), p. 161. Revelation is considered to be "God's witness and communication of Himself to the world for the realization of the end of creation." Special revelation is what is intended when speaking of revelation to prophets of God. Gustav Friedrich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. and revised by George E. Day (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, 1978), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>S. Herbert Bess, "The Office of the Prophet in Old Testament Times," Grace Journal 1 (Spring 1960):8.

<sup>3</sup>For the etymology of the Hebrew word נְבִיא , see TDNT, s.v. "προφητης, נְבִיא," by Rolf Rendtorff, 6:796ff. Also, New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Prophet" by C. Brown, 3:77.

how Aaron would be to Moses as a prophet.<sup>1</sup> "And he (Aaron) shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, . . ." (v. 16). The words translated "spokesman" in the King James Version are the words "he shall speak for you" in the Hebrew text ( דַבֵּר-הוּא לָהּ ). This sense is further explained in the next clause, ". . . he shall be to thee instead of a mouth" (הוּא יְהִי-לָהּ לִפְהָ). Moses' part was to be a god to Aaron (Exod 4:16). Moses was to put words into Aaron's mouth, and in this manner, "Aaron would stand in the same relation to Moses, as a prophet to God: the prophet only spoke what God inspired him with, and Moses should be the inspiring god to him."<sup>2</sup> These concepts are summarized in Exodus 7:1 by the word נְבִיא (prophet). Aaron was to report the words Moses gave to him.<sup>3</sup> These verses help to explain the meaning of the term נְבִיא, that of a spokesman for another.

#### The Message of a Prophet in Deuteronomy 13 and 18

After having forbidden certain methods of communicating with the supernatural world (Deut 18:9-14), Moses

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<sup>1</sup>Bess, "The Office of the Prophet in Old Testament Times," p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, The Pentateuch, in Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, vol. 1, trans. by James Martin (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 451.

<sup>3</sup>John Calvin, Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony, vol. 1, trans. by Charles William Bingham (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 96.

then explains to the children of Israel "the true and legitimate means by which God's Word would be delivered to his people."<sup>1</sup>

In verse fifteen of Deuteronomy 18, Moses states basically the intent of this section (15-18): (1) At any time Israel is in need of a mediator like Moses, a prophet would be sent.<sup>2</sup> (2) This prophet would arise out from the nation itself (מקרבך מאחיה). Thus, there would be no need to seek communication with the spirit world outside of this means. (3) The people of Israel were to listen to him since he gave God's message to them. Verses sixteen through eighteen summarize the reason future prophets would arise. The people requested someone to intervene between them and God so they would not die. God promised them such a man and said, "I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him" (18:18).

The next section (verses 19-22) gives the tests by which the Israelites would know the prophet who spoke from

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<sup>1</sup>Peter C. Craigie, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, Pentateuch, p. 394. The point is also made that the singular use of נביא does not preclude the plural understanding of other prophets arising after Moses, i.e., prophetic succession. Another point is mentioned that with the singular נביא, the Messiah cannot be excluded from consideration as the one to whom Moses is ultimately pointing. This is perhaps seen most clearly in Acts 3:22, where Peter quotes Exodus 18:15, finding its prophetic fulfillment in Christ. See also Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 262, f.n. 18, p. 263.

God and one who spoke presumptuously or did not speak God's message. The criteria that distinguished between true and false prophets was: one who spoke in the LORD's name without a message from him or one who spoke in the name of another god was a false prophet (v. 20). If a prophet speaks and the ". . . thing follow not . . .," that prophet is false.

On this latter point, the Hebrew clause is **הדבר לא-יהיה**. **דבר** has been used previously in verses eighteen and nineteen (plural), twenty and twenty-one (singular). So, in context one could also translate **דבר** in this clause as "word."<sup>1</sup> **יהיה**<sup>2</sup> is translated "happen," but could be translated "is." Thus, with the negative particle, **לא**, the sentence could be translated "the word is not true." This would seem to imply that the word spoken would simply not be so. Craigie finds in this the intimation that if the word spoken did not agree with previous revelation, it was to be regarded as suspect.<sup>3</sup> This perception is further

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<sup>1</sup>Word is the basic meaning for **דבר**. See BDB, p. 182f. Schmidt notes that **דבר** in prophetic usage is a term for prophecy or the "word of God" and in connection with verse 20 states that false prophets steal the words of God or Yahweh and the message they speak does not come from Yahweh. Then this interesting comment: "In the history of prophecy, the word increasingly displaces other means of revelation such as the dream, and reception of the word takes the place of possession by the Spirit." TDOT, s.v. "**דבר**," by W. H. Schmidt, 3:109-10. The charismatic aspects such as visions through which prophets did receive revelation (Joseph, etc.) seem to have been reduced as time went on and as revelation became fuller.

<sup>2</sup>Imperfect, third masculine singular from **היה**.

<sup>3</sup>Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 263.

corroborated by Deuteronomy 13:4. To understand the meaning of this verse, a brief examination of some sections in chapter twelve is in order.

Chapter twelve begins with an injunction to destroy the sanctuaries of foreign gods (vv. 2-4). This theme is again touched upon in verses thirteen and fourteen. Finally, in verses twenty-nine to thirty, the theme of falling under the influence of foreign gods is reiterated. The Israelites were not to inquire about foreign gods in the area of worshipping practices (v. 30). The reason was that the followers of these gods would sacrifice their children as an offering to the deities. This was a detestable thing to the Lord (v. 31).

Verse thirty-two is placed as the first verse of chapter thirteen in the Hebrew text.<sup>1</sup> Some commentators understand this verse as the conclusion of chapter twelve.<sup>2</sup> Others consider it ". . . an intermediate link, closing what goes before, and introductory to what follows."<sup>3</sup> The following comments follow the latter commentary's division.

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<sup>1</sup>See Das Alte Testament, ed. by Rudolf Kittel (Stuttgart: Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1974), p. 284.

<sup>2</sup>Gerhard Von Rad, Deuteronomy: A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 96; Andrew Harper, The Book of Deuteronomy in The Expositor's Bible, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), pp. 277-78.

<sup>3</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, Deuteronomy, p. 362; Craigie, Deuteronomy, pp. 221-22.

Chapter twelve related to places of worship, including methods of worship. Chapter thirteen presents those who would seduce the people of Israel into following idolatrous practices. First, the religious leaders or prophets (vv. 1-6), which is the group with which this section of the paper is concerned, are mentioned. Next, family members (vv. 7-12); and lastly revolutionaries (vv. 13-19), all of whom would seek to lead the people astray religiously.<sup>1</sup> Between the two chapters appears a solemn warning concerning the laws which have come before and those which come after chapter twelve, verse thirty-two. The admonition is to obey the entire law without adding to it or taking away from it in relation to idolatry and the worship of the true God of heaven.

The first source of temptation to worship other gods comes from a prophet, one who is a dreamer of dreams, who gives a miraculous sign and tells the people to go after other gods and serve them (vv. 1,2). Moses tells the Israelites that they are not to listen to the words of that type of a prophet because ( כִּי ) the LORD is testing<sup>2</sup> them to see

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> נִסָּה piel act. participle m.s. נִסָּה . Used of the testing of Abraham by God (Gen 22:1) and of Israel by God (Exod 15:25). God would give the Israelites his word, expecting them to obey it, and test the people to see if they actually would obey through love. An example of this on an individual basis is located in 1 Kings 13:11-25. God revealed his will to an old prophet, then tested his obedience by bringing another prophet who said a word contrary to that which the older prophet had received. The older prophet believed the lying prophet and as a result was killed as punishment. The principle of this illustration is that of obeying the previously revealed Word of God, not a revelation that completely contradicted that will of God which was revealed.

to what extent they love him (v. 3). The fulfillment of the sign is not to be the main criterion for the authenticity of the prophet and his message (cf. Deut 18:22, where a fulfilled sign is the verification of the prophet). If a prophet came into the camp preaching something that contradicted previously revealed directives from God (i.e., past revelation), they were not to listen to that prophet.

Thus, the importance of signs and wonders was secondary to the past revealed Word of God. The prophets were adding to what the LORD had previously commanded the children of Israel to obey if they told the people to worship other gods.<sup>1</sup> And, as Keil and Delitzsch state, this guideline did not contradict the command to listen to prophets who would come in the future ". . . for even their announcements were to be judged according to the standard of the fixed Word of God that had been already given; . . ." (cf. 18:21,22).<sup>2</sup>

From these selected verses, it has been suggested that in reference to revelation, an Old Testament prophet was one who: (1) was a spokesman for another who gave words to say to the prophet, (2) gave a message the content of which could not contradict previous revelation. To the extent that a prophet would contradict previous revelation, he would be adding to or diminishing the Word of God.

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<sup>1</sup>Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 223; Keil and Delitzsch, Deuteronomy, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The Mormon church acknowledges the content of these verses, Deuteronomy 18:32 in particular, and states that those who believe the Bible alone to be God's revelation to man use verse thirty-two to prove the Book of Mormon is not of God.<sup>1</sup> They believe that the people who refer to this passage must exclude the remainder of the Old Testament and the entire New Testament since further revelation is, according to the Mormon church, to be omitted.<sup>2</sup>

The message of Deuteronomy thirteen and eighteen is not against the possibility of further revelation. Further revelation is one teaching of the passage (Deut 13:1; 18:15, 18). The major point of these passages is to give a guideline for determining whether that which is presented by a

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<sup>1</sup>Howard W. Hunter, "No Man Shall Add To or Take Away," Ensign 11 (May 1981):64-65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

prophet is in fact the Word of God. That guideline is: the agreement of further revelation with past revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Mormons are misinterpreting this principle when they seek to find in it sanction for their revelations.

The Message of a Prophet in Amos 3:7

As has been mentioned, the Mormon Church consistently directs attention to this verse to bolster the claim that

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<sup>1</sup>It is not within the purposes of this paper to give evidence as to whether the canon is completely closed, but rather, the guideline just stated in the text will be used to discover whether the Mormon scriptures are in line with biblical revelation.

The Mormons are in a dilemma in this regard whether they realize the fact or not. For, on the one hand, they agree with this scriptural principle as is evidenced by the following quote:

If I (Joseph Fielding Smith) should say something which is contrary to that which is written and approved by the church generally, no one is under obligation to accept it. Everything that I say and everything that any other person says must square itself with that which the Lord has revealed, or it should be rejected (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, I:323).

But, on the other hand, past president Lee insisted that if anyone states something which is contrary to the standard works, except what the president states, that word is to be rejected. Harold B. Lee, "The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," p. 192. And, in the same article, he teaches that the living authority of the church is to take precedence over dead past authorities (p. 189). Benson bluntly gives the warning to Mormons to "beware of those who would pit the dead prophets against the living prophets, for the living prophets (and their words) always take precedence" (Benson, "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets," in Following the Brethren, p. 10). Thus, what Mormon leaders state is contrary to the scriptural injunction of Deuteronomy 13 and 18. The message of Mormon revelation will be examined in the next chapter, and the writer will seek to demonstrate the basic difference in one area between the message of the Bible and that of Mormonism.

prophets are absolutely necessary for any work that the Lord wants to accomplish at any time on earth.<sup>1</sup> God will do nothing without prophets. But, what does Amos 3:7 really teach? Who is involved? What events are the focus of these verses?

The context within which this verse is placed includes verses one through eight. In order to correctly understand verse seven, a brief examination of these verses will be undertaken.

Verses one through eight comprise a judgment against Israel. This is evident from the first two verses. The sons of Israel are commanded<sup>2</sup> to hear certain words that the LORD has spoken against (לָעַל) them (v. 1). First, Israel was chosen by God for a special relationship with Him.<sup>3</sup> No other nation in the world had the particular relationship that Israel had with God. Because of this kind of acquaintance (לָעַל-כֵּן), the LORD is going to visit<sup>4</sup> all of their sins upon them (v. 2). God cannot ignore sin, especially in this chosen nation.

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<sup>1</sup>Mark E. Peterson, "The Role of a Prophet," in Living Prophets for a Living Church, p. 172; LeGrand Richards, "Prophets and Prophecy," Ensign 5 (November 1975):50.

<sup>2</sup>שָׁמְעוּ, qal. act. imperative.

<sup>3</sup>יָדַעְתִּי, meaning to know in the sense of being acquainted with or knowing someone well, i.e., to be intimately acquainted with someone. See BDB, p. 394, cf. also Jer 1:5.

<sup>4</sup>BDB, p. 823.

Verses three through six are a series of questions which ask about ". . . the relation between an event and its cause. Each presses toward the agreement of the audience: 'It is true! This thing would not happen were it not preceded by the other.'"<sup>1</sup> Verse seven seems to be an intrusion into the sequence of questions, with verse eight providing the climax of the series of questions. This study will focus on verses six through eight. Israel is the focus of the attention of Amos' oral judgment from God.

Two men walk in Palestine together by previous agreement at a meeting (v. 3). A lion on the hunt will not roar unless he has caught his prey, nor will a young lion make a noise unless he scents a meal (v. 4). If a bird falls, a trap and bait is assumed; if a trap springs up from the ground because its tripping mechanism was struck, a captured animal is assured (v. 5). Amos has been using illustrations from everyday life. Things that are rather non-personal, yet that add the point to which Amos is ascending. Judgment is the tone of this section of verses and in veiled similes, Amos has been hinting at such a judgment.

Verse six gives an illustration that perhaps touched a sensitive nerve since the possibility of attack was always a reality.

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<sup>1</sup>James Luther Mayes, Amos: A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 59.

As the trumpet, when blown in the city, frightens the people out of their self-security, so will the voice of the prophet, who proclaims coming evil, excite a salutary alarm in the nation. For the calamity which is bursting upon the city comes from Jehovah, is sent by Him as a punishment.<sup>1</sup>

The next two verses explain verse six. כִּי, introducing verse seven, is used with "intensive force, introducing a statement with emphasis, yea, surely, certainly."<sup>2</sup> The LORD will not do ( עָשָׂה ) a thing<sup>3</sup> except ( כִּי־אֵל )<sup>4</sup> he "revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets." גִּלָּה (revealeth) has the meaning of "uncovering," "removing," or "disclosing" something.<sup>5</sup> The object of the revelation is the "secret counsel" ( סֵדֶר )<sup>6</sup> of the LORD. The thing which the LORD plans to do is his secret counsel. In the context (cf. vv. 1,2), it is some type of judgment. "And since the judgment with which the Lord is drawing near fills everyone

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. Keil, The Minor Prophets, trans. by James Martin in Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>BDB., p. 472.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 183 (cf. Gen 22:16), the concept seems to be that indefiniteness. Whatever God does. Contents of his action is gleaned from the context.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 474, these particles have the purpose of limiting the preceding clause (cf. Gen 32:27).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 691. Proverbs has much to say about man revealing secret counsels of other men (Prov 11:13; 20:19; 25:9). But in this case, God reveals through his prophets.

with fear, and Jehovah has spoken, i.e., has made known His counsel to the prophets, they cannot but prophesy" (v. 8).<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

Thus, the purpose of a prophet in Amos was to expose: (1) the sins of the nation of Israel calling for repentance and (2) the coming judgment of God upon the people.<sup>2</sup> A few necessary points should be made. The prophet in the Old Testament worked only in relation to the nation of Israel. The revelation of the secret counsels of God is limited to the chosen nation of Israel as the context of Amos illuminates the matter, and as Cohen states:

This verse must mean that in the realm of great national judgments, which in that period would fall upon the nations of Israel and Judah, God definitely and consistently used the prophets to announce what judgments would befall those nations and why.<sup>3</sup>

Is the Mormon Church correct in using this Amos 3:7 to bolster the claim of needing modern-day prophets for revelation? In the context of Amos, the answer is no, because Israel's judgment is in focus--not the Mormon Church. The Mormons, however, have an interesting theory about their church. It is believed by Mormons that a Gentile can become

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<sup>1</sup>Keil, Minor Prophets, 1:262.

<sup>2</sup>ZPEB, s.v. "Prophets and Prophecy," by A. A. MacRae, has a more complete listing of the purposes of a prophet. But the major activities seem to be (1) revealing sin, (2) threatening judgment unless repentance displayed, and (3) promising blessings to come if the Word of God is obeyed.

<sup>3</sup>Cohen, Amos, p. 113.

one of the literal seed of Abraham through the work of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost purges ". . . out the old wood (of a Gentile), and make(s) him actually of the seed of Abraham."<sup>1</sup> The Gentiles, thus "changed," ". . . are adapted into the house of Israel--so that the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob become their inheritance."<sup>2</sup> The Mormons then believe that they are Israelites when they become members of the LDS Church. In this manner, they transfer all the Old Testament promises to the Mormon Church and thus may directly apply the verses given to Israel (such as Amos 3:7) to themselves. But it takes more than new blood to make one an Israelite; it necessitates correct parentage.

#### The New Testament Prophet

The next topic of study is that of prophets in the New Testament. It is evident that the Mormons do not have a favorable argument in the Old Testament for the need of Old Testament prophets today for revelation in their church. Is one to be found in the New Testament?

The role of a prophet in the New Testament can best be explained by examining some who held that title, and by observing their activity and the content of their message. Where other Scripture is pertinent, it will be mentioned, especially in regard to the prophet in the Church.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977), p. 150.

<sup>2</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 390.

## The Activities of a New Testament Prophet

John the Baptist. This man was, it seems, a prophet in the Old Testament mold. He preached judgment and repentance.<sup>1</sup> His message, as summarized by Matthew, was "repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2). The Pharisees and Sadducees he condemned as vipers (Matt 3:7); the people he advised to produce fruits that evidenced they were repentant (Lk 3:8). A king he accused of sin and John lived so consistently that even the accused admired him (Mk 6:17ff). His message conformed to the prophetic messages of the Old Testament. Jesus also called him a prophet and yet more than a prophet (Matt 11:9), he was the forerunner of the Messiah and the greatest among men.

Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ understood himself to be a prophet (Lk 13:33). The people also considered him to

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<sup>1</sup>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Prophet," by C. Brown, p. 82. Also, Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, s.v. "προφήτης," by Gerhard Friedrich, pp. 836ff. It is to be acknowledged that there is a similarity between O.T. and N.T. prophets (ibid., p. 849). But in this thesis, the message is the differentiating factor. If the message concerns the Kingdom of God or Heaven, the one giving it is considered to be in the O.T. line of prophets. Thus, Peter and John, in the early chapters of Acts, may be recognized as O.T. prophets (esp. Acts 3:19ff where their message has a definite flavor). In the later chapters of Acts, a change in the content of messages took place. From an announcement of the Kingdom of God and the need of repentance, the message transferred to a pronouncement of Jesus as the Messiah (F. J. Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, The Acts of the Apostles, vol. 1 in The Beginnings of Christianity [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979], p. 306.)

be a prophet (Mk 6:15; Jn 4:19). His disciples regarded him as a prophet (Lk 24:19). Jesus seems to have been a prophet in the Old Testament sense, for he was compared with them seemingly because of his message and the signs that accompanied it (Lk 9:8). He called for repentance (Lk 5:32), and taught the people with authority (Matt 7:29; Mk 1:22). The word, ἐξουσία, seems to express at least in the Gospels, something similar to the introductory phrase, "Thus saith the LORD" of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Thus, his words had divine authorization such as Old Testament prophets had. Probably the manner in which Jesus expounded ancient Scripture contributed to the conviction that he was a prophet.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, as the Old Testament prophets were spokesmen for God, so John the Baptist and Jesus were as well. They both preached a basically Old Testament message, i.e., repent and worship God in truth. The additional revelation, although it was new, did agree with Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah. John thus prepared the way for the Messiah in accordance with prophecy (Matt 3:3, 11:10; Mk 1:2,3; Lk 1:17,76; 3:4-6), and Jesus added to Old Testament revelation, but what was added agreed with that given in the past (Matt 5:17,21ff; Gal 4:4).

<sup>1</sup>TDNT, s.v. " προφήτης ," by G. Friedrich, p. 843.

<sup>2</sup>E. Earle Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 137.

Specially commissioned prophets. In the account of the nativity of Christ, some were equipped by God to make prophetic proclamations. Zechariah, enabled by the Holy Spirit, proclaimed a fulfilled Old Testament message of salvation (Lk 1:67ff, cf. Ezek 29:21). Elizabeth (Lk 1:41f), Simeon (Lk 2:29f), and Anna (Lk 2:36f) all gave what was essentially an Old Testament message of deliverance.

The Twelve Disciples and the Seventy in the Gospels. Luke nine, Mark six, and Matthew ten, give information concerning the twelve men Jesus chose to follow him. These were given power and authority over all demons and diseases. They thus could cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse lepers (Matt 10:8; Mk 6:7; Lk 9:1). They were to proclaim the kingdom of God (Lk 9:26) and that men should repent (Mk 6:12). Thus, in the Gospels, the Twelve Disciples expounded an Old Testament message. Miracles were the authenticating signs of their message; as Christ performed miracles, so his disciples did as well (Lk 9:6). This activity was according to Old Testament standards (Deut 13,18, see section above) to prove their message was from God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Miracles," by O. Hofius, pp. 629-32.

The Seventy<sup>1</sup> also were sent by Christ. The purpose for sending them, as stated in Luke 10:1, was to go to every place to which Christ himself was planning to go. Perhaps because of the references to the manner in which they were received (δέχομαι, vv. 8ff), Christ sent these out as advance teams, and He would then go to those cities which received these men. Their message was identical to that of the Twelve (Lk 10:9) and they at least cast out demons (10:17,19) as a sign of the authenticity of their message.

These two groups, because of their messages, were probably more in the line of Old Testament prophets. They were sent by Christ, proclaiming the message he had given to them, which was a proclamation of the Kingdom.

The Mormons, of course, would use John the Baptist, Christ, and the Twelve and Seventy as examples of the standard of prophet needed today. But, as explained above, the Old Testament prophet preached a message that agreed with past revelation (i.e., Old Testament revelation). In

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<sup>1</sup>Some think that Luke 10:1f is but an expanded account of 9:1-6 and 9:52 (I. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, in the New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978], p. 416). Others (Norval Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, in the NICNT [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952]) feel that all three sendings are different. The latter is assumed here (p. 299). There is no contextual reason for understanding these three accounts to be referring to the same events. In fact, the Twelve had no recorded destination as far as the direction they were to go. The Seventy were told to go to every city and place to which Christ himself was to go. Thus, there is more and better evidence for understanding these three "sendings" (Lk 9:1f,52; 10:1f) as different activities.

addition, these prophets did not contradict past revelation but told of its fulfillment in Christ.

Prophets in the Book of Acts. There are similarities between the roles of Old Testament and New Testament prophets that are noticeable throughout the Book of Acts. An examination of the use of προφήτης in Acts will follow in order to discover what part they played in the early Church. There are passages that do not refer to New Testament prophets, but to Old Testament prophets (Acts 2:16,30; 3:18,21,22,24,25; 7:37,42,48,52; 8:28,30,34; 10:43). Some of these verses mentioned may be used to give evidence of various points in the paper, but they do not refer directly to a person living in the time of the early Church who was titled a prophet.<sup>1</sup>

Acts 11. This passage states that some prophets went to Antioch from Jerusalem, and one of them, Agabus, prophesied through ( διὰ ) the Spirit that a famine would take place throughout the world. It seems, however, that

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<sup>1</sup>While it is acknowledged that the references to prophets in Peter's and Stephen's speeches are references to O.T. prophets, it is important to note that in applying the O.T. verses to the events then taking place, these men do not add to or take away from the O.T. text or sense of the passages quoted. And Peter, in Acts 3:11-26, was offering the Messianic message again which, if the Jews had accepted, would have received the times of refreshing, including Christ, and a restoration of all things Jewish. Αποκαταστάσεως is a cognate of the verb used in 1:6 by the disciples in a kingdom context (Homer A. Kent, Jr., Jerusalem to Rome [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972], p. 42, fn. 7). Thus, for the Mormons to apply Acts 3:11-26 to the restoration of the Church is erroneous. It applies to Israel alone.

it would be especially severe in Judea since a contribution for the believers there would be sent (11:29). Thus, foretelling the future was one aspect of a prophet's ministry.<sup>1</sup> Another instance of Agabus foretelling the future is recorded later in this book. There (21:10f), Agabus tells Paul that if he went to Jerusalem he would be given to the Gentiles. Other possible predictions include Paul's counsel to the elders of Ephesus that he would not see their faces again (20:23f), and Paul telling the people on board a ship that there would be no loss of life (27:22).

This type of activity is identical to that of Old Testament prophets intended for the authentication of the message given. This is also one role of a New Testament prophet.<sup>2</sup> The implication, evident from the form of προφήτης, is that there was more than one role since it is plural. But, as Ellis notes, Luke seems to limit the term of title, προφήτης, to a select number of leading men ". . . who exercise considerable influence in the Christian community."<sup>3</sup>

Acts 13 and 15. These two chapters explain parallel functions of a prophet and will be commented on together.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>The miracles taking place as signs for authentication of one's message is what Paul did as well (cf. 13:11f).

<sup>3</sup>Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, p. 129.

Certain words are used in the context of the word, προφήτης, that will help to further delineate the role of a New Testament prophet.

Acts thirteen states that at the Antioch Church there were prophets and teachers ( διδάσκαλοι ) who ministered to the Lord (13:1,2). A teacher in the church was one who ". . . had the task of explaining the Christian faith to others and of providing a Christian exposition of the O.T."<sup>1</sup> As Meyer writes these prophets and teachers ". . . did not speak in the state of apocalyptic inspiration, but communicated instruction in a regular and rational unfolding of doctrine."<sup>2</sup> This is demonstrated in the ministries of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, besides others. Later in this same chapter, Paul, in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, stood up and interpreted Old Testament Scriptures in relation to Christ.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Teach," by K. Wegenast, 3:768.

<sup>2</sup>Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles (Winona Lake, Ind.: Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 244. He does, however, feel that because of the Greek wording ( τε . . . καί . . . τε . . . καί ) that the first three were prophets and the second two were the teachers. Rackham also acknowledges this, but concludes that "it is simpler to consider them as one body of rulers, who both prophesied and taught--the rabbis of the Christian society." The text would seem to favor this conclusion. Richard B. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 188-89.

<sup>3</sup>Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, pp. 132-34. He goes on to state that in regard to interpretation of Scripture, there is no sharp division between a teacher and a prophet because, in Acts at least, teaching is not described as prophecy, nor limited to prophets. But prophets did teach.

Prophets in the New Testament did teach the Word of God: the Old Testament. This was an activity of Old Testament prophets, as well,<sup>2</sup> who applied it to different situations as the Spirit of God led, but did not add to in the sense of negating Scripture already given. This is also what the New Testament prophets accomplished.

Acts fifteen also reinforces this concept. Judas and Silas were prophets (v. 32), two select men sent along with Paul and Barnabas and the message of the Jerusalem Church, to Antioch. Once there, the letter was read probably by Judas or Silas. After reading the epistle, Judas and Silas, since they were prophets,<sup>2</sup> began to "exhort" ( παρακαλέω ) and "confirm" ( ἐπιστηρίζω ) the saints. These two words represent an activity of prophets.

In the context of Acts fifteen, men went from Jerusalem (perhaps sent by James, Gal 2:18) to Antioch and taught that one had to be circumcised in order to be saved (v. 1). This caused dissension between Paul and Barnabas

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<sup>1</sup>Compare Jeremiah 48:45 with Numbers 21:28 and Jeremiah 50-51 with Isaiah 13:14. See Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, p. 133, who feels interpretation can be inferred from O.T. texts in which the prophet uses and reapplies "older biblical phraseology and ideas."

<sup>2</sup>Meyer places the " καί αὐτοί " with " διὰ λόγου κ.τ.λ. " in keeping with verse 27 (Meyer, Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles, p. 297), emphasizing personal involvement. This is possible, but it would not change the fact that Judas and Silas were prophets. (See Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, p. 131.) Meyer may have a good point in context.

and those who had said these things. Στάσις has the meaning of "strife," "discord," or "disunion."<sup>1</sup> This disruptive characteristic of a debate would naturally cause dissension among the members of the church there. Thus, what the prophets, Judas and Silas, did as they exhorted those at Antioch, was to encourage ( παρακαλέω ) them to conduct their lives in the right manner, to prove they were Christians.<sup>2</sup> They had been saved by grace; now they were not to inject the keeping of the law into salvation. The words of Judas and Silas thus agreed with the written and prophetic decree of the Council in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> The ministry of παρακλήσις/ παρακαλέω was one that in this context New Testament prophets did, and it was a form of prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

By exhorting the saints to live right, these prophets were then strengthening ( ἐπιστηρίζω ) them as well. This ministry was also part of the role of a New Testament prophet.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>BAG, p. 772.

<sup>2</sup>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Exhort" by G. Braunann, 1:570.

<sup>3</sup>Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>It is noticeable that Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching ( διδάσκω ) and preaching ( εὐαγγελίζω ) the Word of God (15:35). These are two of the ministries of prophets.

From the verses examined in Acts, it is evident that prophets: (1) foretold some future events; (2) taught or expounded the Word of God; (3) encouraged believers to live correctly; and (4) strengthened believers in their faith. The New Testament prophets thus compare closely with the Old Testament prophets, at least in the Gospels and Acts.

The Mormon theology of prophets is essentially in agreement with all that has been observed about prophets thus far. Mormons would concur with what has been written and would state that this is what is needed today in order to have a true church on the earth. The Mormons would disagree, however, with the following two sections.

#### The Duration of New Testament Prophets

Perhaps one passage to examine in this connection would be 1 Corinthians, chapter thirteen. The discussion centers on the word *κατεργέω* of verse eight where Paul states that prophecies will *κατεργέω*. What does this mean? Will prophecies and prophets stop altogether? The basic meaning of the word is "to render inactive,"<sup>1</sup> and it occurs three times within four verses (8-11), all in the passive voice. The first occurrence speaks about the rendering inoperative of the gift of prophecy. That this is not a permanent cessation of prophecy is understood by: (1) Its use by Paul in his other writings. Christ rendered inoperative

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<sup>1</sup>TDNT, s.v. "*κατεργέω*," by Gerhard Delling, 1:452-4, also "to make completely inoperative," or "to put out of use."

the Law which stood as a barrier between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:15), but that action did not abolish or invalidate the Law as an ethical standard (Rom 2:14). The writer of Hebrews states that the death of Christ rendered ineffective the one who has power over death (Heb 2:14). The Devil still has this power, but for the believer it is inactive. Thus, the word "fail" does not mean a complete cessation of prophecy forever, as was pronounced for tongues. A non-permanent cessation of prophecy is also understood by:

(2) The prophesying of the two witnesses who will perform signs such as biblical prophets have done (Rev 11)<sup>1</sup>; and  
 (3) the prophesying that will also take place during the Millennium (Joel 2:28).

Thus, it can be stated that prophecy would become inoperative for a time. Smith thinks that, in light of the context of verses eight through twelve, prophecy will be made unnecessary by the arrival of the eternal state (the "perfect" that is to come, v. 10). Even though prophecy

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<sup>1</sup>It perhaps should be mentioned that while the two witnesses are prophesying, which includes preaching, etc., there is nothing to indicate that their message will add different revelation that disagrees with what has been given. In fact, if these witnesses preach during the Tribulation (Charles R. Smith, Tongues in Biblical Perspective [Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH, 1973], p. 79), their message would have a distinctive Old Testament flavor. In this connection the use of Revelation 14:6 by the Mormons to prove a restoration of the gospel is not useful to them because: (1) It is the everlasting gospel, which in verse 7 is one of warning of judgment and a command to worship God aright. The gospel of Mormonism is not biblical, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter; (2) The context is tribulational, not church age, in chapter 14.

will be utilized during the tribulation and millennium, this passage does not say it will be exercised throughout the Church Age.<sup>1</sup>

Ephesians. The fact that prophecy will not be practiced by prophets throughout the Church Age is found in Ephesians 2:20. This verse is in a section of verses (19-22) in which the Ephesians as well as all believers receive a glimpse of the results of salvation. They are described as a new society and family (v. 19), and as a building and temple (vv. 20-22).<sup>2</sup> In verse twenty, Paul states that the Ephesians were built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ the chief cornerstone. There are several questions that need to be answered which will help to discover the length of time these people were in the Church.

Ἐποικοδομήθεντες ἐπὶ κ.τ.λ. . This aorist passive participle implies that they had been built on a foundation (θεμελίω) some time in the past--probably when they were saved. The ἐπὶ ". . ." gives prominence to the idea of the foundation on which the structure rests."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Smith, Tongues in Biblical Perspective, pp. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup>James L. Boyer, "Greek Exegesis: Ephesians (unpublished class syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, 1974), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>John Eadie, Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (reprint ed., Minneapolis, Minn.: James and Klock Christian Publishing Company, 1977), p. 192.

θεμελίω τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν. This phrase has two basic problems. The first is: Do prophets refer to Old or New Testament men? The second is: What is the foundation?

The first question is easily answered. The article preceding the two nouns does not mean that both indicate the same individual, but both belong to the same category.<sup>1</sup> The order of apostles and prophets would also indicate New Testament men.<sup>2</sup> The foundation is shared equally by Jews and Gentiles.<sup>3</sup> Two other references in this same book have the same order and must refer to New Testament prophets (Eph 3:5; 4:11).<sup>4</sup> Thus, for these reasons, προφητῶν must refer to New Testament prophets and then part of the Church. While these people may have characteristics of Old Testament prophets, which would be natural, they are not the same, and in such close connection with apostles in this passage that, when one ceases, the other would as well.

The more difficult question is that of the foundation. Are "apostles" and "prophets" appositional, meaning that the foundation consists of the apostles and prophets?

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<sup>1</sup>William Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 141, fn. 74.

<sup>2</sup>Eadie, Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup>Hendriksen, Ephesians, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup>Homer A. Kent, Ephesians: The Glory of the Church (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), p. 47.

Or is "foundation" a subjective genitive--the foundation which the apostles laid, i.e., their teachings? Or are they a genitive of possession: the same foundation on which the apostles are built, i.e., Christ?<sup>1</sup> All of these are true, but the first two are perhaps the better choices. However, Hendriksen feels that Revelation 21:14 notwithstanding, it would be better to understand these groups as referred to not because of what they are in themselves, but because of their office: representing Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. This genitive absolute shows that Christ is considered to be what in the East is considered a stone more important than the foundation. Ἀκρογωνιαῖος is used in one other passage in the New Testament (1 Pet 2:6), where it is in a quote by Peter of Isaiah 28:16. Paul evidently had the same passage in mind when he recorded these words.<sup>3</sup> The cornerstone was

<sup>1</sup>Kent, Ephesians, p. 47, and Boyer, "Ephesians," p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Hendriksen, Ephesians, p. 142, fn. 75. Wood takes the first choice; see A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p. 43. Revelation 21:14 is an additional verse that contributes to the argument that the apostles in Ephesians 2:20 refer to the twelve apostles specifically. In the Gospels and Acts, the Twelve generally referred to the men Jesus chose as his disciples and appointed as apostles (Matt 10:1-5; Mk 3:14; Lk 6:13, 9:1, 22:14; Acts 6:2). Thus, when the phrase "Apostles of the Lamb" is used in Revelation 21:14 it refers to the twelve whom Jesus chose and not to the multitude that the Mormons have claimed and do claim as apostles of their church.

<sup>3</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Rock: γωνία," by W. Mundle, 3:390.

probably "either one of the large cornerstones which bind together two rows of stones, especially in the foundation or the keystone which completes an arch or structure."<sup>1</sup> The evidence points to the first suggestion.<sup>2</sup> While Christ is called the cornerstone in this passage, in another he is titled the foundation (1 Cor 3:11). This does not prevent Paul from using a different idea. Christ, being the cornerstone, simply distinguishes him from the foundation.

The apostles and prophets themselves constitute the foundation as being closely associated with Christ in the establishment of the church. They were witnesses of his resurrection appearances and the preachers of the good news.<sup>3</sup>

The work of the apostles and prophets was foundational (and) dealt with the founding of the church. After the church was established, both ceased.<sup>4</sup>

### Summary

It has been shown that a prophet is a spokesman for God. He has various gifts to use that prove his message is from God. With this, the Mormons are in basic agreement. A prophet may receive and give further revelation from God, but that revelation will not and, in the Bible, does not negate, contradict or take away from past revelation. But just as Old Testament prophets ceased with Malachi, so New Testament

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 389.

<sup>3</sup>Wood, "Ephesians," p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Boyer, "Ephesians," p. 43.

prophets ceased, along with apostles, because their work was foundational. They established the church through their words and labors, and now the Holy Spirit is building believers in Christ as living stones into a spiritual house upon that foundation (1 Pet 2:4-10). The one who makes this all possible by his position as a cornerstone is Christ. He is the one who indeed makes believers living stones and then "governs the place they hold in the building (Eph 4:7-8)."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Mormons have a church without a Scriptural foundation. Prophets, though very necessary at the beginning of the Church, are not necessary today. Mormon theology is found to be devoid of the biblical evidence it so desperately needs to maintain its own existence.

#### The New Testament Apostle

The Mormons believe that apostles have to exist in order to have a true church on earth. They believe also that an apostle is a special witness of the name of Christ and is one who is sent to preach the principles of Mormon salvation to others. He is one who knows of the divinity of Christ by personal revelation and is to give what has been revealed to him by Christ to the world.<sup>2</sup> Is this a correct definition? Is there apostolic succession today? The

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<sup>1</sup>Kent, Ephesians, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 46.

writer's approach will be to consider first the establishing of a group called apostles; second, an examination of Paul; and finally, the question of apostolic succession.

#### The Establishment of the Apostles

The commissioning by Christ of the Twelve and their designation as apostles is recorded in various passages (Matt 10:24; Lk 6:12-16; without the title apostles: Mk 3:16-19; Jn 1:35-43).<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the account in Luke would explain what being chosen as an apostle meant.

#### Luke Six

The account begins with Christ on a mountain, praying the entire night (v. 12). After praying, he called the disciples together. Out of that number, he appointed or called ( ἐκλεξάμενος ) twelve. These he also named ( ὠνόμασεν ) apostles ( ἀποστόλους ) (v. 13). From this description of events, it can be deduced that the Twelve were a special group chosen by Christ and that their historicity is thus assured. Also, Jesus gave to them the name apostles. This would counter the view that the

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<sup>1</sup>Mark 6:30 uses the word ἀπόστολος in reference to the Twelve, in context (cf. 6:7-13). Luke 9:1-10 records the mission of the Twelve Apostles.

concept of apostles arose later in church history through circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Christ, out of all the disciples that followed him, chose twelve and named them apostles.

### Mark Three

The passage in Mark (3:14,15) gives the tasks of these apostles.<sup>2</sup> Christ made (ἐποίησεν) the Twelve, with the purpose (ἵνα) being twofold. (1) They were to be with (μετά) him. (2) They were to be sent by Christ to preach,<sup>3</sup> and have power or authority to cast out demons.

### Requirements to be an Apostle

When one turns to Acts, chapter one, Luke introduces him to the same group Jesus appointed earlier, with one difference. There were eleven, not twelve apostles. Why the

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<sup>1</sup>Meyer, Gospel of Matthew, p. 206. Some would understand the two aorist main verbs as referring to different times in the past (Marshall, Commentary on Luke, p. 239), but whether they do or not, Christ is the one, at least in Luke, to first make this designation. In fact, with two exceptions (Lk 11:49; Acts 14:14), Luke applies ἀπόστολος expressly to the Twelve. (The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Apostle," by D. Muller, 1:128.) Thus, Christ's use should be considered the earliest understanding of who the apostles were.

<sup>2</sup>While there is a textual variant in this verse (3:14), the purpose and task of the Twelve is not involved in the question.

<sup>3</sup>This has a continual aspect to the infinitive form. Nigel Turner, Syntax, vol. 3, in A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), p. 78.

Eleven felt the need to choose one more is not completely known.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the reason, this activity records the criteria of choosing a twelfth member of this body of apostles. (1) The choice was to be a man; (2) he had to have accompanied Jesus from the time John the Baptist was active until the day he was taken into heaven, and (3) he had to have witnessed the resurrected Christ. Thus, the requirements were outlined and Matthias was chosen to replace Judas.

#### The Uniqueness of Paul

Paul many times in his letters calls himself an apostle of Christ, on equal standing at least as to his message with the Twelve original apostles. His conversion is given much space in Acts (9:1-19; 22:1-21; 26:2-18). Yet he considered himself in a different category from the Twelve. First Corinthians 15 explains how Paul felt. He recites to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection (the gospel, vv. 3-4) beginning with Peter and ". . . last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles . . ." (vv. 8,9a). Paul establishes his claim to apostolic status on the same basis as the original twelve. He was commissioned by Christ on

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<sup>1</sup>Dodd suggests that Christ's saying about the twelve thrones was the basis for the action. The disciples ". . . had no doubt assumed that the chosen twelve constituted a permanent government in the 'Israel of God.'" According to the Scriptures (reprint ed., London: Nisbet and Company, Ltd., 1953), p. 59.

the road to Damascus and at the same time he witnessed the resurrected Christ, but in a different manner. Thus, he considered himself like the Twelve in authority (comp. 1 Cor 14:37 with 1 Jn 4:5,6), yet unlike them in that he had not intimately known Christ during his earthly ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The biblical concept of an apostle ". . . implies that he is a messenger of the gospel sent directly by Christ and a 'witness of the resurrection.'"<sup>2</sup> Except in the case of Paul, they proclaimed "that . . . which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life" (1 Jn 1:1). They were eyewitnesses of Christ.

#### Apostolic Succession

Having covered the basic requirements of an apostle, the topic of succession is a necessary subject to cover in light of Matthias' succession to Judas' place among the Twelve. Did that succession set a precedent for others to follow? Two lines of arguments indicate the negative.

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Apostles, Prophets, Teachers," The Reformed Theological Review 27 (January/April 1968): 13.

### Supposed Examples of Succession

The Mormons claim that Paul replaced someone, perhaps James; and James, the brother of Jesus and presiding elder of the Jerusalem church, was another apostle.<sup>1</sup> Were these instances of succession?

Paul, as discussed above, did not consider himself one of the Twelve. Christ appeared to him as to an untimely birth ( τῷ ἐκτρόματι ). The singular feature of this prepositional phrase is the article. "Its function is to draw attention to this birth as something singular and even shocking."<sup>2</sup> Paul felt that since he did not have the necessary requirements for apostleship that it was shocking and out of the ordinary for him to have been chosen by Christ.<sup>3</sup> The words, ἐόχρατον δὲ παντῶν , if taken absolutely, would imply that there was no possibility of continuing the apostolate by calling others.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Paul did not consider himself in a continuing line of apostles.

James, the brother of Jesus, did not meet all the requirements because well into Christ's ministry James and his brothers still did not believe in him (Jn 7:5). But

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<sup>1</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 50 (Acts 14:14).

<sup>2</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Birth, ἐκτρόμα ," by H. Muller and C. Brown, 1:182.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., for various interpretations of this phrase.

<sup>4</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Apostle," by D. Muller and C. Brown, 1:130.

Christ did appear to him after the resurrection. It is Luke who calls James an apostle (Acts 14:14), not Paul. There is no scriptural evidence that James ever attained to the status of the Twelve.

The passage in 1 Corinthians is interesting. It differentiates between the Twelve and the five hundred more, and James and all the apostles, using apostles in a wider sense. It is perhaps this sense which again has a different meaning than the Twelve Apostles, that was understood in passages that refer to apostles other than the Twelve (Acts 14:14; Rom 16:7).

#### Scriptural Evidence

The passage examined above (Eph 2:20) is patently clear that the apostles were foundational to the Church and "as such their function is unique and intransmissible."<sup>1</sup> When the apostles died, the office ceased. If the Church was to be refounded, it would need another cornerstone.<sup>2</sup>

Mentioned above also was the fact that apostles had to have been witnesses of Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:22).

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<sup>1</sup>Klaas Runia, "The Papal Claim of Petrine Succession," The Reformed Theological Review 24 (February 1965): 19.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Tongues in Biblical Perspective, p. 72.

Thus, the apostolic office was limited to one generation of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

One final point is the authority of the apostles' writings. They were the measuring stick for Scripture.<sup>2</sup> As Paul states, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor 14:37). To this, John also adds, "We (apostles) are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us" (1 Jn 4:6). The apostles' words were final, for as Paul states, after telling the Corinthians the manner in which he

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<sup>1</sup>Sasse, "Apostles, Prophets, Teachers," p. 13. Mormon apologists acknowledge the problem of being an eyewitness in regard to their cult. Smith states rather extensively:

It is questionable if all of the apostles in the former dispensation (the time Christ was on the earth) were 'personal' witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, if by that is meant that he appeared to them after his resurrection. This is certainly true of the original eleven. Paul saw in vision, but we have evidence that the Council of the Apostles was maintained for some time after the death of some of the original Twelve (Acts 1: 15-16; Eph 4:11-16; Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 12:28-29; Gal 1:19).<sup>1</sup> Whether these ever had a visitation from the Savior, the records do not state.

Every member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles should have, and I feel sure have had, the knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This does not have to come by direct visitation of the Savior, but it does come from the testimony of the Holy Ghost. (This testimony is not from Scripture, but a personal experience that is unexplainable. Thus, the Mormons ignore scriptural requirements and insert their own standards of apostleship [Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3:153]).

<sup>2</sup>Moule, The Birth of the New Testament, p. 179.

had come to them (speaking words taught by the Spirit), "we (apostles)<sup>1</sup> have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16).

#### Summary

A New Testament apostle was an eyewitness of Christ after his resurrection and preached what he had seen and heard. This office, along with that of prophet, was foundational for the Church of Christ, and thus temporary, as 1 Corinthians reinforces (13:8). One does not lay a foundation twice. Their words were the standard of the canon. What they wrote was Scripture (2 Pet 3:14-16). The Mormons do not have a scriptural foundation for their belief that apostles are needed today.

#### The Apostasy of the Church

The last topic of this chapter is the apostasy of Christ's Church. The Mormons believe that such an apostasy took place after the original twelve apostles died. The apostasy was complete. After this time, the true church did not exist. A brief examination of the Church as to its founding will follow.

#### Ἐκκλησία

There are three uses of ἐκκλησία<sup>2</sup> in the New Testament: (1) A political assembly of free citizens (Acts 19:32;

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Tongues in Biblical Perspective, p. 65, states this is either an editorial "we," or it refers to all the apostles, but it is an apostolic "we."

<sup>2</sup>Ἐκκλησία has the meaning of "assembly," BAG, p. 240.

39,41; (2) The Jewish assembly of the Old Testament (Acts 7:38, where the point is the congregation of Israel); (3) The Christian Church of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Each of these meanings is completely distinct from the other. Three uses of ἐκκλησία help to further explain its meaning in the New Testament. It is used in reference to: (1) the Universal Church that is the whole spiritual body of all true believers in Christ (Eph 1:22-23, 4:4; Heb 12:23; 1 Cor 12); (2) The Local Church or a local group of believers meeting to worship (1 Cor 1:2, 16:19); and (3) the Historical Church which is all Christians on the earth during a specific time period (Acts 9:31).<sup>2</sup>

In order to gain a better understanding of the true Church of Christ, it will be necessary to examine the first use of ἐκκλησία in the New Testament.

Matthew 16:18-19

In light of the teaching of this passage, it is entirely fitting that Christ should be the one to first mention

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<sup>1</sup>Alva J. McClain, "Christian Theology: The Kingdom and the Church," an unpublished class syllabus, with revisions by John C. Whitcomb (Grace Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 83. The Mormons confuse the Church and the Kingdom of God. McConkie states that they are synonymous (Mormon Doctrine, p. 133). There is no direct Old Testament reference to the Church, although there may be veiled illustrations that are not understood until revealed in the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor 3:16,17; 1 Pet 2:5,6). Indeed the Church was a secret or mystery (μυστήριον) until Paul, by revelation, revealed it (Eph 3:1-13), see the New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Secret," by G. Finke-warth and C. Brown, 3:504.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-84.

the Church. The Mormons claim that the Church ceased. Christ's teaching gives some guidelines in this matter.

These verses are contained in a section that supplies Christ's reaction to his rejection by the Jews: he abandons the religious leaders (16:4). He then instructs his followers on various topics--one of which is the Church.<sup>1</sup> The person of Christ is revealed to the disciples, ending with Peter's dynamic statement about Christ's Messiahship (16:13-17). Christ's statement to Peter concerning the Church comes next. Verses eighteen and nineteen will be considered.

Κάγω. The comparison evident in this word is that Peter had just made a statement about Christ. Now Christ will make one about Peter.<sup>2</sup>

ὅτι σὺ εἶ πέτρος. Christ here seems to be playing on Peter's name, which means a stone.<sup>3</sup> Previous to this (Jn 1:43), Christ named Peter "Cephas," which is in Aramaic what Peter is in Greek.<sup>4</sup> Peter's character, however, was not rock-like. In fact, just after this brilliant confession, he rebuked Christ for predictions of the cross in the future (Matt 16:22f) and Christ had to reprimand Peter.

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<sup>1</sup>This usage of ἐκκλησία must be understood as universal, since it relates to no local situation.

<sup>2</sup>Heinrich A. W. Meyer, Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup>BAG, p. 660.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ. Some feel that in this phrase, Peter is the ledge rock.<sup>1</sup> The Mormons believe that this rock is revelation.<sup>2</sup> Some others believe that the rock is Christ and still more believe it is the truth of Peter's confession.<sup>3</sup> The better view would seem to be the latter one. This position would best fit a feminine, third person pronoun (ταύτη) and the usage of πέτρα,<sup>4</sup> in the way Christ used it. Also, it would be able to include the position that Christ is the rock. It is definitely not the Mormon belief. For, while Peter's statement is a revelation, the Church is not built on revelation per se, because all Scripture points to either Christ as the foundation, cornerstone and head of the Church (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 1:22, 2:20, 4:15), or to the apostles and prophets as the foundation (Eph 2:20).

Ὀικοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ πύλαι ᾄδου κ.τ.λ.

The future tense of ὀικοδομήσω<sup>5</sup> emphasizes the future promise of Christ that he would build his Church. It is a future

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 646.

<sup>3</sup>See Stanley D. Toussaint, Behold the King (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1980), pp. 201-03, for an evaluation of the major views.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>5</sup>Whether this is an aoristic future or a progressive future is not the issue with Mormons. The writer believes that in light of the historical events of Acts, this is a predictive future.

prospect, although the time is not stated.<sup>1</sup> The pronoun *μου* points to possession. So Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, is going to build a church that is His own some time in the future. This is something new. It is to be an organism that has never existed before. Christ did not call Israel "my church." This was a possession that was not understood to Old Testament saints.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Mormonism, confusing Israel with the Church of Christ, is not tenable on the basis of this verse. Israel was not a church in the New Testament sense of an organism with Christ as the head (Eph 1:22; 4:15), because it was a future event to the disciples who were Israelites.

The clause translated "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" contains a phrase that was used in reference to the realm of the dead and even to death itself.<sup>3</sup> So the point Christ is making is ". . . that the church as founded on the truth of Christ's person and work would not be held captive by death."<sup>4</sup> The strongest enemy man has--

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<sup>1</sup>Alva J. McClain, "Christian Theology: The Kingdom and the Church," with revisions by John C. Whitcomb (unpublished class syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, 1979), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Toussaint, Behold the King, p. 203. Although the term was familiar to the Jews of that time since it was used in the Septuagint to refer to Israel as either a congregation or a body, it was used here with a very singular meaning of an organism, as later Scripture demonstrates.

<sup>3</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Gate/ πύλη," by D. Hill, 2:30.

<sup>4</sup>Toussaint, Behold the King, p. 203.

death--would not shake the One who founded and is building his Church. And if the One who founded the Church could not be stopped by death, how could the organism he began possibly be cut off by anything as insignificant as the death of the apostles or the problems within the visible church which the Mormons suggest precipitated the church's demise?<sup>1</sup> No, there is no difficulty too difficult for the Head to alleviate.

Mormons confuse the Kingdom of God with their church.<sup>2</sup> This means that they take the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament and apply the same to their church.

Because the King of the Kingdom first mentioned the Church after having preached about the promises of the kingdom to the Jews, it is difficult to observe a direct connection. It is evident that the Twelve, even after having received the prediction of a church, still had the kingdom uppermost in their minds (Matt 19:27-38; 20:20-23; Mk 10:35-37) and needed further revelation concerning the Church. This was given to them after Christ's ascension (Eph 3:4-13, cf. Acts 10:1-11:18). Thus, the Church is a different entity

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<sup>1</sup>Predicted "apostasy," Matthew 24: which has a tribulational context. 2 Thessalonians 2: which also is tribulational in time (cf. Dan 9). John 16:23; Galatians 1:6-8; Titus 1:15-16; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Peter 2:1-2 all of which are addressed to believers with the overriding theme of standing firm in the faith which was once delivered (Jude 4). There is no suggestion in the contexts of any of these verses, used by Mormons to prove an apostasy, that the Church would succumb. Some would depart from the Church, but this would prove that they were not connected to the head of the Church (1 Jn 2:19) (Apostasy and Restoration, pp. 4-7).

<sup>2</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 411.

than the Kingdom the Israelites were looking for and than the Mormons seek for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

The contention by the Mormons of a complete apostasy by the Church falls through the opening that a study of Scripture reveals. The theology of the Church in their system does not stand up to God's Word. The Founder of the Church is still building His Church as he was in those early days (Acts 2:47).

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<sup>1</sup>See Toussaint, Behold the King, pp. 204-5, for the other reasons which are not as good. For an excellent study and explanations of the Kingdom of God, see Alva J. McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1974), pp. 16ff.

The Mormons believe that the keys were given to Peter (Matt 16:19) with the purpose of endowing the holder with power to govern all the affairs of the earthly kingdom and direct the administration of all the ordinances of salvation and exaltation (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 412). The keys are the ones to the kingdom of heaven. In classical literature, keys were symbols (New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Open/κλείς," by D. Muller and C. Brown, 2:729). Toussaint (Behold the King, p. 205) gives two options: (1) the keys could mean that Peter would be the one to open access to the kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles, or (2) keys symbolized authority, and since the kingdom of heaven always refers to the millennial kingdom in Matthew, Jesus was giving Peter an exalted position in his coming kingdom. Their position in the kingdom was a matter of great importance to all the disciples (Matt 19:27f; 20:20f; etc.). Whatever position one takes, the keys were offered to Peter alone, who was an apostle. Peter died and there is no scriptural evidence he passed them on and as an apostle of Christ, he could not pass them on since the Twelve were in a special position both in the Church and in the kingdom.

### Summary

It has been demonstrated that the prophet of both the Old and New Testaments was a spokesman for God to give revelation concerning God and His plan for man. It has also been established that the New Testament prophet and prophecy, both of which the Mormons seek, ceased and died out around A.D. 100. John wrote, agreeing with Paul, that the written words of the apostolic band and associates were the authority of God for the Church. Thus, continuing revelation was not needed in that day, nor in this day. The Apostolate, those who were eyewitnesses of Christ and his resurrection (1 Jn 1:1), also ceased when the last eyewitness died. Thus, the Mormons have no scriptural foundation on which to build their edifice of modern-day revelation.

Added to these facts is the lack of scriptural evidence for an apostasy of the true universal Church. Christ promised to build his Church and even the greatest enemy of all, death, would not overcome it, causing it to cease. Since this is true, how can the Mormons maintain that people who have the spirit of antichrist (1 Jn 2:18) can force the demise of the Church? The Mormons deal in a falsehood by worshipping in an organization whose claim to be the Church of Christ is heretical.

But there is yet another thread to weave into the vesture of falsehoods the Mormons wear over their church.

This concerns the message of Mormonism. What is the central message of their "scripture"? Does it agree with the Bible? The next chapter will deal briefly with this topic.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MESSAGE OF MORMONISM AND THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE

What is the message of Mormonism that is presented to people? What does Mormonism teach that coincides with the Bible? Or are the messages that the Bible and Mormonism present totally different? This section of the thesis will establish how Mormon teachings handle a problem discovered in the last chapter: Does new revelation agree with past revelation, or does it add contradictory information and claim that the new supercedes the old? The field of inquiry will be limited to two essential areas: the gospel of salvation, and Christology. The gospel: what is it and how is one saved? Christ: Who is he? The Bible will be surveyed first, then the Mormon theology and how it compares to Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup>For a good discussion of the gospel as presented in the Old and New Testaments, see Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, s.v. "Gospel," by David R. Jackson, 2: 779-784. He points out that there are close similarities between the Gospel of the Kingdom that Christ and his disciples preached and the Gospel of Christ later preached by the Apostles. The similarities centered in the person of Christ. The differences seem to be the approach in preaching to different aspects of time. The gospel to the Jews was that of the coming kingdom while that preached to Gentiles was concerning the Church (cf. Eph 3; 6:19).

Biblical View of the Gospel and Christ

The Gospel According to Paul

In the preaching and writing of Paul, the Gospel<sup>1</sup> is presented clearly and methodically. He himself writes that the gospel he gave to the Galatians was true and anyone who presented a different kind of gospel was to be accursed (Gal 1:8,9). Thus, the study of the gospel will be limited to Paul in his epistles and in the Book of Acts. The classic presentation Paul gives of the gospel is in 1 Corinthians 15.

The Gospel in Selected Epistles

First Corinthians Fifteen

Paul, in verse one, makes a transition to a new subject ( δέ )--the resurrection of Christ (vv. 1-11). These verses form the foundation for arguments concerning the resurrection of the Corinthians. To begin his remarks, Paul begins with a reminder ( γυμνάζω )<sup>1</sup> of the gospel ( εὐαγγέλιον ) he had preached to them before (v. 1). He, with ever-increasing emphasis,<sup>2</sup> explains to the believers in Corinth the gospel. Verses one and two point out the value of the gospel Paul preached. It was the message they

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 626.

<sup>2</sup>Meyer, Corinthians, p. 341.

had received in the past and in which their faith was established ( ἐστήκατε ) and also the means by which they were being saved ( σώζεσθε ). The gospel was all important both to Paul and to the Corinthians.

With verse three, Paul begins an explanation of the gospel he preached. To outline his words briefly, there are four basic elements to this message. These Paul had received from somewhere else ( παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν κ.τ.λ. ). This phrase in the Greek is a technical expression employed by Hebrews for transmitting and receiving tradition. This may suggest an existing pattern for Christian preaching.<sup>1</sup>

The first element was that of the substitutionary death of Christ. This meant that Christ died at a point in history. The second element was proof he had actually died and was buried, and the third was that he was raised on the third day, with his appearing to many as the fourth element. This, then, was the gospel Paul had consistently preached to the Corinthians. The basic fact is the substitutionary death of Christ in which Christ took our sins in his body on the cross (1 Pet 2:24). This point is extremely important in light of what the Mormons teach. Christ then was raised from the dead as proof that he was the Son of God (Rom 1:4).

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<sup>1</sup>Davidson, "Gospel," p. 781; Dodd, According to the Scriptures, pp. 14ff.

The key phrase, κατὰ τὰς γραφάς (according to the Scriptures) occurs twice and is quite significant to the phrases to which it is appended. It is added to two phrases<sup>1</sup>: the substitutionary death and the resurrection. The use of this expression points to that aspect of preaching the gospel that relied on Old Testament passages to prove that this message was true. The principle evidence is that new truth does not contradict old truth. Paul ". . . is anxious to demonstrate that God performs His atoning work in Christ as the prophets had announced."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps Paul has in mind Isaiah's prediction of the suffering Savior (Isa 53) in verse three. In verse four, "according to the Scriptures" modified the element of Christ's resurrection, and not his burial. Perhaps, since burial is a part of death, it needs no modifiers.<sup>3</sup> Even the aspect of being buried three days is understood as predicted in Old Testament Scripture (Jonah 1:17, cf. Matt 12:40).<sup>4</sup> These then are the essentials of the gospel that Paul proclaimed. It produced the salvation

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<sup>1</sup>F. W. Grosheide suggests that this prepositional phrase is missing from the second element because it was only an interlude between the death and the resurrection. The First Epistle to the Corinthians, in the New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 350.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 349. The last aspect of the gospel, that of being seen by witnesses, would also be assumed if one has been raised from the dead. Thus, no need for Old Testament proof.

<sup>3</sup>Lenski, Corinthians, p. 632.

<sup>4</sup>Grosheide, First Corinthians, p. 350.

of all who believed in Christ and promised a resurrection after death. But how does this gospel produce salvation? Ephesians, another of Paul's books, gives the answer.

#### Ephesians Two

Paul, after ". . . relating God's plan of salvation and His mighty power which effected it through Christ . . ." <sup>1</sup> explains how this salvation was ". . . made operative in the lives of the Ephesians." <sup>2</sup> First, he comments on the former condition of the Ephesians (vv. 1-3). They were dead because of sins and they lived their lives according to this world system and its ruler. Then, he sheds light on the mighty works of God (vv. 4-6) which made it possible for them to sit in heaven with himself. God's purpose (v. 7) was to make known to the Ephesians the riches of his grace. This naturally leads to an elucidation of God's method for salvation (vv. 8-10). <sup>3</sup> This latter section is the area of concentration here.

Paul states, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (v. 8). The verb, ἔστε σεσωσμένοι , is a present parastrophic perfect, indicating durative force of a past action. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kent, Ephesians, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Boyer, "Ephesians," pp. 30-31.

<sup>4</sup>John A. Sproule, "Intermediate Greek Notes," unpublished class notes (Grace Theological Seminary, 1977), p. 94.

Thus, one is presently in a saved state as a result of a previous saving act.<sup>1</sup> The means whereby God had saved the Ephesians was through (διὰ) faith (πίστεως). Up to this point, there is essentially no problem. Even the Mormons can accept the foregoing. The problem is within the next phrase.

Paul further states that τοῦτο οὐκ ἐκ ὑμῶν. The question to be asked is: What is the antecedent of τοῦτο? There are varied opinions,<sup>2</sup> but grammatically the best option is understanding it as referring to the subject under consideration: salvation by grace through faith.<sup>3</sup> Even faith then is not a work of man anymore than grace or salvation. It comes from God.<sup>4</sup> To further drive home the point that salvation is not from man himself, Paul adds that it is not a result of works (οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων) in order that no one might boast. "Salvation is a gift of God from beginning to end, from planning to accomplishment."<sup>5</sup>

But works do play a part in the saved person's life. Paul writes that we are God's product (ποίημα) made "for

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<sup>1</sup>Boyer, "Ephesians," p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Hendriksen, Ephesians, pp. 121f, gives the three main views: (1) Grace is God's part, faith is our part in salvation; (2) faith is included in the gift of salvation (emphasis on salvation); (3) this refers to faith alone, which is a gift of God.

<sup>3</sup>Boyer, "Ephesians," p. 36.

<sup>4</sup>Kent, Ephesians, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

the purpose of" good works<sup>1</sup> ( ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς ). These good works were prepared beforehand (προητοίμασεν ) so that the Ephesians could make them the ". . . very element of (their) lives."<sup>2</sup> Thus, salvation is a total gift from God. "Faith is a recognition and admission of no merit and a simple acceptance of salvation as a gift."<sup>3</sup>

### Summary

The gospel of Christ, as explained by Paul, is salvation by grace through faith in the work of Christ on the cross. It is totally a gift of God. This message is in substantial agreement with the Old Testament. This latter point is substantiated both by the Corinthian passage examined above and by a brief examination of one of Paul's messages in Acts.

### Examples of Paul's Methodology

Two examples will be surveyed--a sermon summarized by Luke (Acts 17:2,3) and a sermon in Paul's own words (Acts 26 before Agrippa II).

### Acts Seventeen

Verses two and three summarize Paul's activity in the Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica. It was his custom

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<sup>1</sup>Nigel Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, in Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), p. 272.

<sup>2</sup>Boyer, "Ephesians," p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

or manner to go to the synagogues when he arrived in a new city. While in this particular town, he reasoned ( διαλέγομαι ) about Christ with the attenders of the synagogue. "He expounded the O.T. scriptures on three successive sabbath days, bringing forward as evidence of their fulfillment the historic facts accomplished in the ministry . . ." <sup>1</sup>

He followed what is expressly said to have been his general practice, of commending the Gospel by arguing from the Scriptures. He 'opened up' the meaning of certain passages from the Old Testament, and 'adduced' them as evidence for his conclusions. The points that he made are summed up as follows: (i) that the Messiah is a suffering Messiah; (ii) that the Messiah rises from the dead; and (iii) that this Messiah is identical with Jesus. <sup>2</sup>

#### Acts Twenty-Six

Before Agrippa II, <sup>3</sup> Paul defended his missionary work. Essentially he contends that:

No good Jew, . . . ought to take exception to his preaching, since there is nothing in it which cannot be justified out of 'Moses and the prophets.' In particular, the three points to which exception was taken are all attested by scripture, viz. (i) that the Messiah is a suffering Messiah; (ii) that the Messiah is to rise from the dead, and (iii) that He is to proclaim the light of salvation both to Israel and to the Gentiles. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>F. F. Bruce, The Book of the Acts, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), p. 343.

<sup>2</sup>Dodd, According to Scripture, p. 16. Even Paul's message on the Areopagus at Athens holds the essential points of the death and resurrection of a Man (Acts 17: 22ff).

<sup>3</sup>Agrippa was an expert in Jewish customs, which may have affected Paul's defense (cf. v. 3).

<sup>4</sup>Dodd, According to Scripture, pp. 16-17.

## Summary

Paul's preaching of the gospel harmonizes with his writings. He preached Christ: his death and resurrection, and the benefits to mankind if they place their faith in Jesus. This is essentially the Gospel of the Bible. All parts of the Bible agree. This conclusion brings up the fact that it should not be surprising to find this Christ as the central figure of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Since this Person is so essential to Scripture as a whole, a brief glimpse at his character, both in the Bible and in Mormonism would be

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<sup>1</sup>This fact is evident from certain Scriptures, John 16:18ff, in particular. There Jesus told the eleven disciples that he had much to tell them, but they could not bear or endure it. But the Spirit of truth would come and would disclose (ἀναγγελεῖ) what was to come. The next verse (14), Christ explains what the Holy Spirit would disclose: things concerning Christ. Further in the chapter the disciples wanted to question Jesus about things he had said, but Jesus told them (v. 23f) that they would ask no questions 'in that day' (in context, it would seem to refer to post-resurrection appearances, v. 19). The reason was that they would ask the Father questions and he would answer and give whatever they might ask (in context, things about Christ). The disciples wanted revelation concerning Christ. They could not receive it, but the Holy Spirit would reveal things about Christ as the eleven asked the Father (cf. 19:26). (It would be dangerous for believers today to apply this passage to themselves.) These things are recorded for the believer in the books of the New Testament.

This is evident from phrases used by those who recorded revelation:

- (1) John 20:30-31--Jesus did many things, but these things John wrote have a purpose.
- (2) John 5:39--Jesus told the Jews that Old Testament Scripture witnessed about him.
- (3) Luke 24:45-47--Jesus tells the Disciples that Scripture (O.T.) foretold about the Messiah and his death and resurrection, i.e., Jesus Christ.

helpful. For if the Mormons present a different Christ, then their gospel is in error, since both the Old and New Testaments agree that Christ is the Savior.

#### The Person of Christ

This section will, in outline form, state the character of Jesus. Those passages examined will be John, chapter one and Luke, chapter one.<sup>1</sup>

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- (4) Acts 1:1,2--Luke recorded all Jesus began to do and teach in his gospel and intimates that Acts is a continuation of Jesus' acts (cf. 2:47).
  - (5) Galatians 1:12--Paul received his information about Christ's Church from Christ, probably through the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul's revelation was Christocentric.
  - (6) 1 John 1:1-4--John recorded what he had seen and heard from Christ.
  - (7) Revelation 1:1--John recorded the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Thus, from beginning to end, the Bible's central character is Jesus Christ. For the basic content of the Book of Mormon, see H. Michael Marquardt, "The Use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon," Journal of Pastoral Practice 1 (1978):2-94:136, and "Early Nineteenth Century Events Reflected in the Book of Mormon," Journal of Pastoral Practice 3 (Winter 1979):1:114-36 and Harry L. Ropp, The Mormon Papers: Are the Mormon Scriptures Reliable? (Downers Grove: Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1977), entire.

<sup>1</sup>These verses deal with the deity and the origin of the birth of Christ. As John records (1 Jn 4:1-4), these are the testing grounds for Christology. There are many verses, but these deal with the widest area of doctrine, with which Mormons have problems. Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, in the NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 72.

### The Deity of Christ

John, in the first verse of his gospel, confronts the reader with the eternality and deity of Christ. The eternality of Christ is evident in the phrase, "in the beginning" ( ἐν ἀρχῇ ). These words are probably reminiscent of the first words in Genesis.<sup>1</sup> The two meanings possible for ἀρχή are "beginning," such as in commencement, or "origin and first cause."<sup>2</sup>

Some have proposed that this verse has an absolute sense which carried the meaning of "something before time, i.e., not a beginning within time, but an absolute beginning, which can be affirmed only of God, of whom no temporal categories can be predicated."<sup>3</sup> This is understood from verse three, for all things were made by the one who was in the beginning. Thus, this beginning had to precede all things that were made. This is also an assertion applicable to God. Perhaps Temple is correct in emphasizing both meanings in this verse. For, as he states, "Very often a word covers several meanings because the meanings really are connected together, and the mind easily passes from one to the other without consciousness of movement."<sup>4</sup> He feels

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<sup>1</sup>Other words remind one of Genesis 1, such as light ( φῶς ) and darkness ( σκοτία ) (v. 5; cf. Gen 1:3), word ( λόγος ) and "God said."

<sup>2</sup>BAG, pp. 111-12.

<sup>3</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Beginning," by H. Bietenhard, 3:166.

<sup>4</sup>William Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel (London: MacMillan and Company, Ltd., 1955), p. 3.

the meaning is "in the beginning of history" and "at the root of the universe."<sup>1</sup> At any rate, "John is affirming that the Word existed before creation, which makes it clear that the Word was not created."<sup>2</sup>

This verse also explains that the "Word" (λόγος) was with God and was God (ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος).<sup>3</sup> The construction of these sentences is difficult to translate. The verb ἦν as an imperfect refers to action that was durative in past time.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Word was continually God in the beginning. He was not in a completed state, nor coming into being. "It is appropriate to eternal, unchanging being."<sup>5</sup> The preposition πρὸς, with the accusative, means "toward" or "to" and "with,"<sup>6</sup> thus, of close proximity. Morris suggests accompaniment and relationship indicating the close fellowship

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., see also Morris, John, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Morris, John, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>There is much debate over the question of whether John took his concept of λόγος from Greek sources (Philo) or Hebrew concepts (see Morris, John, pp. 115-26). For a good synopsis of the views, also The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Word/λόγος," by B. Klappert and C. Brown, 3:1081-1119). But it seems clear that John did not take his essential thinking about this word from a Greek background, so a Jewish background is more likely (Morris, John, p. 117).

<sup>4</sup>Sproule, "Intermediate Greek Notes," p. 28.

<sup>5</sup>Morris, John, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup>BAG, pp. 716-18.

between the Word and the Father. But, above all of this, the Word was God.<sup>1</sup> And since God is eternal (Jn 4:24; 17:5,24; 1 Tim 1:17), the Word is eternal. Since God is unchangeable (Mal 3:6), the Word is as well (Heb 13:8).

### The Incarnation of Christ

But, this eternal Word became ( ἐγένετο ) flesh (v. 14). Luke records the angel's explanation to Mary of the manner by which it would take place. Gabriel summarizes who the child will be (1:32-33). He will be the son of the Most High and the son of King David. This relates his lineage physically and also provides a glimpse at his real "Father's" identity. Mary's wonderment is vocalized in the next verse (v. 34) and the angel's response is in verse thirty-five. The Hebrew parallelism is evident in the two clauses that form the answer.<sup>2</sup> The clauses relate that the Holy Ghost "will come upon" ( ἐπελεύσεται ) Mary and the power of the most high ( ὑψίστου ) will overshadow ( ἐπισκιάσει )<sup>3</sup> her. How it will happen is not discussed. But, as a result of this activity by the Holy Spirit ( διό )<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> θεός is the predicate since in cases such as this usually the predicate nouns are anarthrous (see Nigel Turner, Syntax, p. 183).

<sup>2</sup>Geldenhuyts, Luke, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>This term is in the LXX for God's presence resting on the tabernacle in the cloud (Ex 40:35), and metaphorically of God protecting his people (Ps 91:4). See Marshall, Luke, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>BAG, p. 197.

the holy begotten child will be called the Son of God.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the child will be holy, apart from sin. He will not become the Son of God, for he was already the Son of God, and he would "in his humanity, reveal Himself as a divine Being; and for this reason, too, He will be acknowledged as such and will be called Son of God."<sup>2</sup>

The angel in these words does not merely announce that the incarnation of Jesus will take place through the direct influence of the Holy Ghost, but also expressly declares that He who will through Him be begotten as Man will be free from all taint of sin--He will be the Holy One.<sup>3</sup>

This is an important point, as will be demonstrated when examining Mormonism's view of Christ. The deity of Christ is thus demonstrated by his pre-incarnate existence as God and further in his incarnation. He was God and he will forever be God. He is the beginning and the end (Rev 1:8); the first and the last (Rev 1:11). He has no beginning of days, nor end of days; he is eternal (Heb 13:8).

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<sup>1</sup> γεννώμενον has a textual variant with a prepositional phrase (ἐκ σου ) added. The participle without the preposition is better attested. The syntax of this phrase is disputed. The choices of translation are "The child shall be called holy . . ." or "The holy child shall be called . . ." According to Marshall, καλέομαι usually follows the predicate (Luke, p. 71). Thus, the first choice may be the better choice of the two. But the KJV (cf. NASB) reading is followed here. The difference is not that great. The child is holy and the Son of God. The participle has a future reference.

<sup>2</sup>Geldenhuys, Luke, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

But what do the Mormons teach about the Gospel and Christ? The next section will state a few beliefs and make some comparisons.

### The Mormon View of the Gospel of Christ

#### The Gospel

To the Mormons, the Gospel of Jesus is the plan of salvation.<sup>1</sup> In the Book of Mormon, third Nephi, the following words are written:

And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.<sup>2</sup>

These words were supposedly spoken by Christ. There are two kinds of gospels in Mormonism. The first is the "fulness of the Gospel." This is composed of "the laws, doctrines, ordinances, powers, and authorities needed to enable men to gain the fulness of salvation."<sup>3</sup> Another kind of gospel is entitled the "preparatory gospel." This is "a lesser portion of the Lord's saving truths, which prepares and schools men for a future day when the fulness of the gospel may be received, . . ."<sup>4</sup> This preparatory gospel is composed of

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<sup>1</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup>3 Nephi 27:16.

<sup>3</sup>McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 333.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

". . . repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, . . ." <sup>1</sup>

"Faith involves doing everything we can to bring about the things we hope and pray for." <sup>2</sup> This includes faith as "a strong belief of truth within our souls that motivates us to do good." <sup>3</sup> This strong belief is to be centered in Christ, yet this strong belief is to include works. One must do everything to bring about the things he wants, salvation included. Thus, one must have repentance. The sincere sorrow that is felt for one's sins; the attempting to cease from sinning, and the keeping of the (Mormon) commandments are all part of repentance in Mormon theology. <sup>4</sup> Repentance should be effected every day, all day. In this way, the Mormon considers himself to ". . . experience the daily process of perfecting ourselves." <sup>5</sup> Not only must a

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<sup>1</sup>Doctrines and Covenants, 84:27.

<sup>2</sup>Gospel Principles, p. 115. Faith includes works, the works of faith are obedience, commitment, and repentance which 'open up the channels so that the power of the atoning sacrifice of Christ can flow into us, redeem us from sin, and bring us back into the presence of God." Our "righteous works, activated by our faith in the Savior, are the condition for the operation of (the atoning) power." Gerald N. Lund, "Salvation by Grace or by Works?" The Ensign 11 (April 1981):23.

<sup>3</sup>Gospel Principles, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

Mormon have repentance, but he must be baptized for the remission of sins.<sup>1</sup> Then, to begin to practice as a Mormon should, he needs to receive the Holy Ghost and his gifts.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, it is clear that works are very much a part of the Mormon salvation. This is in direct contradiction to the Gospel which Paul preached. Paul's message was one of salvation which was initiated by God (Jn 6:44) and carried out by God. Man has no part except to recognize what God had done for him and accept it.

## Christology

### The Deity of Christ

The Mormons emphasize the Greek background of λόγος , and assert that the mingling of Greek philosophy and the gospel led to an apostate Christianity. The result of this mixing produced a false doctrine of Deity. This, of course, is necessary since they do not believe that God is eternal in the biblical sense. "God himself was once

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<sup>1</sup>The above article in its discussion on sin separates "sin" from "transgressions." The first term is any willful violation of the law. The latter term is violation of the law that is from ignorance. It must be noted though that in a verse, the author of this article quoted "sin is the transgression of the Law" (1 Jn 3:4). Ἐστίν can be replaced by an equal sign and the predicate and subject reversed and the meaning would be the same. "Transgression of the Law is sin." Thus, one is the other and it is exegetically impossible to do as the Mormons do. Lund, "Salvation: By Grace or By Works?," pp. 18-19. The Mormons maintain a difference between the sin of Adam and individual sins of men. Christ's death atones for Adam's sin, but we must work for forgiveness from our own sins.

<sup>2</sup>Gospel Principles, p. 135ff.

as we are now, and is an exalted man."<sup>1</sup> But Scripture states that God is not a man (Nu 23:19); Christ was not a man before the incarnation, since he is God.

Also, Mormons say Christ is our elder brother literally. "Since all men are the personal spirit children of the Father, and since Christ was the Firstborn spirit offspring, it follows that he is the Elder Brother of all men."<sup>2</sup> Since, according to Mormonism, everyone is an offspring of God in a literal sense, Satan is also Christ's brother and man's as well.<sup>3</sup>

The Mormon doctrine of Christ's deity differs considerably from that of Scripture and thus Mormonism's Christ is not true. Christ is nothing more than an exalted man, one who is a little higher than men living now, but nevertheless a man, according to Mormon doctrine.

### The Incarnation of Christ

In this section, it would be helpful to let the Mormon leaders speak for themselves.

Brigham Young taught a strange doctrine indeed with relation to the humanity of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977), p. 345. "By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 192-3.

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. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he (Christ) took a tabernacle, it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve . . . Now, remember from this time forth, and forever that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup>

This quote is quite revealing and gives an entirely different view of Christ than that of Scripture. It would seem that revelation did change; that new revelation contradicted old, which, according to Scripture itself, should not happen. The new revelation is thereby proved false.

But Young has his defenders, as indeed he must, if he was a prophet. Joseph Fielding Smith tries to prove that Young did not mean exactly what he said. The statement in the quote above concerning tabernacles has reference to Christ's body.<sup>2</sup> To quote Smith:

Adam died as the Father said he would through partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam's spirit and body were separated, and he did not get the resurrection until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Adam, when a spirit without a body, could not beget a body of flesh and bones, therefore, he could not be the Father of Jesus Christ in the flesh.

. . . Therefore, he had to have a Father who had a body of flesh and bones who was immortal, not a father who was a spirit with a body in the grave, . . .

We worship Elohim, the Father of Jesus Christ, . . . the God we worship, is the Father of our spirits; and Jesus Christ, his first Begotten Son in the spirit creation and his Only Begotten Son in the Flesh . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Brigham Young quoted in Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 1:102.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-6.

Smith, while defending Young, concludes in a no better position than did Young.<sup>1</sup> Both arrive at unscriptural teachings. The Bible is in error according to Mormonism. It is impossible then for the Mormon religion to be in agreement with the Bible in its Christology. Yet, in spite of this, the Mormons claim that:

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe the Bible. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible that it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: 'If all men believed the Bible, all would be Mormons.' Bible doctrine is Mormon doctrine, and Mormon doctrine is Bible doctrine. They are one and the same.<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary

What do the Mormons think of Christ? Perhaps a Mormon song would best express the place Christ has, especially in relation to Joseph Smith, in Mormon theology. The song is about Smith.<sup>3</sup>

#### PRAISE TO THE MAN

Verses:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah! Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer. Blessed to open the last dispensation, Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.

Praise to his memory, he died as a martyr; honored and blest be his ever great name! Long shall his blood, which was shed by assassins, plead unto heaven while the earth lauds his fame.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith is "double-talking." Surely the prophet for God on earth, the spokesman for God would know what God had told him and therefore would need no defenders or apologists.

<sup>2</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, What the Mormons Think of Christ (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>In Gospel Principles, pp. 332-33.

Great is his glory and endless his priesthood: ever  
and ever the keys he will hold. Faithful and true, he  
will enter his kingdom, crowned in the midst of the  
prophets of old.

Chorus:

Hail to the Prophet, ascended to heaven! Traitors and  
tyrants now fight him in vain. Mingling with Gods, he  
can plan for his brethren; death cannot conquer the  
hero again.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident from the foregoing study that the Mormon contention for modern-day revelation is not scriptural and is in error since: (1) The continuing need of prophets and apostles is unsubstantiated by Scripture. They were foundational. (2) The Church of Christ did not apostasize, but is yet a vibrant, growing organism, completely unlike the Mormon Church. (3) The principle that new revelation does not contradict past revelation proves that the Mormon gospel is unscriptural, since works are needed and since the Christ of Mormonism does not resemble the biblical second member of the Triune Godhead in his deity.

Therefore, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrines and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the Mormon Church itself, and even the modern-day prophet and apostles are false because there is no scriptural basis for them. Thus, the Mormon Church is winning people to a wrong cause and for the wrong reasons.

There is no need for believers in the true Christ to be deceived by these messengers who preach another kind of gospel than that which Paul preached (Gal 1:8,9). If Scripture is inculcated into the heart and mind, Mormonism

will be exhibited for what it is--a cult which preys on man's false hope to do things, including reaching God in his own way and by his own methods. Mormonism, however, helps man think he can go a little higher, for if one is a good Mormon, he can become a god. This is man's aspiration and Mormonism encourages this thinking with its beliefs. Thus, Mormon missionaries find fertile fields from which to glean their converts.

It is hoped that this work will contribute to Christian knowledge about Mormonism and its world-wide falsehoods.

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