

# Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

*Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ*

January 11, 2020

## **“On Their Shoulders” or “In Their Shadow”**

I was visited by two Mormon missionaries one day. They told me about their prophets and the great revelation which was given to Joseph Smith. One offered me a Mormon bible and asked if I would read it and pray about whether it was the truth. I said, No!” “Why not?” he asked. The following is a summary of my response.

Before the first generation of the church had passed, Jude had to exhort the saints to “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 1:3. In this passage, Jude is clear that the truth of the gospel had already been delivered to the saints. Yet less than forty years after the resurrection of Jesus, the glorious message of the gospel of Christ was being corrupted by those with a “new revelation.” This “new revelation” would lead the church into the dark ages. Jude was not directing the saints to look forward for something new, but back to that which had already been given through the early apostles and prophets of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul spoke boldly of the gospel he preached, saying, “*I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Galatians 1:11-12. So absolute was the gospel he preached, that Paul said, “*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you*

*than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”* Galatians 1:8. (Joseph Smith claimed he received his writings from an angel.)

The early apostles were foundation layers. They preached *“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!”* Matthew 16:16. Their message is the gospel foundation for every generation of the church. Paul said, *“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. **For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**”* I Corinthians 3:10-11. A different gospel message from that which Paul preached is no foundation at all.

The Apostle John was equally bold. He said *“We are of God: **he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.** Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”* I John 4:6. John wrote these words in the same letter in which he wrote *“**He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**”* I John 3:8-9. Do you believe these words which John wrote? You do if you know God!

The question is not whether Joseph Smith, or any other person, received their revelation from an angel, in a vision, or heard a voice from heaven. The only question is whether their revelation is the same as that which was first delivered to the saints and recorded in the scripture. If it is not, as Paul said, let those who

bring it be accursed. I told these two men, "Until you are ready to believe the word of God above "your prophet," you will never know the truth which Jesus said '*shall make you free.*' " John 8:32.

The Mormons have their "men" which they look to as the measure of truth, yet they are not the only ones who do so. Many are indignant that Mormons "foolishly look to their prophets as the measure of truth," but they themselves look to John Calvin, Martin Luther, John Wesley, or some other "great" bible teacher. If their man said it, it should not be questioned.

Others may not have a certain person they look to, instead they have "the fathers." This usually speaks of a certain denomination or religious movement. Many years ago I was told by an elder Assembly of God Pastor whom I loved dearly that I should not question what the men of God in the general council had decided was "the truth." I responded with the scripture "*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar...*" Romans 3:4.

It's not that many of those who went before us were not men and women of God; it's that they are not the measure of truth. God and His word are! Martin Luther saw a great truth which helped deliver millions from the darkness that filled the church of his day. In the history of the world, it would be rare to find a person who took such a giant and courageous step as he did, yet there was also much that Luther did not see and was even absolutely wrong about. Those who hold up Luther as the measure of truth may hold to the truth he saw, but they are also locked into his blindness. The only way to honor a man like

Martin Luther is to do as he did and believe God above men regardless of the cost.

I was always taught to “stand on the shoulders of giants.” If you do this, you might see more than they were able to see. Instead, many are stuck hiding under the shadow of their fathers. Maybe they are afraid of dishonoring their fathers by seeing more than they did. Yet, I believe the greatest way to dishonor a man or woman of God is for those who honor them to uphold their word over the word of God. Do not ever be afraid to see more in God’s word than those who taught you have seen. They may have taken the journey through the wilderness so that you could stand on their shoulders and see the Promised Land!

This message is not a call for anyone to seek out a new revelation. It is a call for men and women to dust off their Bible, read it and believe it for what it says. Look back to “*the faith*” which was once delivered to the saints. Find out for yourself what Jesus, Peter, John, Paul, and the prophets said about the gospel. Search out the unsearchable riches of Christ!