

A Psalm of David. Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.(Psa 37:1-2)

After the last sermon on denominations, a few people asked me to cover three more given the likelihood of encountering them in our daily lives. So today we're going to examine Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists, looking to discern the truth of their being Christians.

We deal with the fables of Catholicism a lot, and there are some real wild tales associated with their idolatry, but I think even some of their more interesting fairy tales pale in comparison to Mormonism.

Mormons maintain that they are the "restored" church of Jesus Christ. Their favored name is "Restored Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints", but I'll just call them Mormons. Their lore contends that after the Apostles died the Christian church fell apart because there was no "priestly authority" exercised over the various churches and they all apostatized, therefore from the first century Christianity is just a version that was perverted by Greek philosophers, giving way to that org chart I showed in my first sermon on this topic.

According to Mormons, they are the one true church, having been restored to the state of early purity by Joseph Smith when Christ appeared to him at fourteen and told him not to join any Christian denominations. And this is where things get bizarre. Christ apparently decided to rescind this

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev 22:18-19)

And send an angel named Moroni to help Smith translate the Book of Mormon, which was written by and is named after Moroni's father, Mormon. This additional "testament of Jesus Christ" as they call it is to be considered as authoritative Scripture, equal to the Bible.

The book details how God supposedly led a group of people from Jerusalem to North America some six hundred years before Christ came. The full title of the book when originally published in 1830 was "*The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*".

So to dissect this

- We have some random teenager
- Who introduces the strange doctrine that angels procreate
- And that angels write Scripture with no apparent inspiration from God in an unknown language
- Which Smith was able to translate into a book off of some golden tablets this same angel led him to
- Said book referencing groups of people that there is no sort of archaeological or other historical reference to their actual existence (the Nephites and Lamanites)
- And you're supposed to take this very seriously

What you have here is a worldwide religion of roughly seventeen million people claiming to be Christian but who follow the impossible to authenticate ramblings of one self-possessed teenager. Don't get me wrong, they claim to believe the Bible, and if you encounter them on your doorstep, you'll find they are very good at quoting it and then wresting it, selectively ignoring the simple things that destroy their religion, like Christ closing the record of His revealed will on earth when the Holy Ghost inspired Scripture was completed.

That's not even the best part of the fantasy, though. One of their past presidents and prophets (everyone in charge is called a prophet) Ezra Taft Benson laid out this concise description of the Mormon mission:

*"We have a sacred responsibility to fulfill the threefold mission of the Church — first, to teach the gospel to the world; second, to strengthen the membership of the Church wherever they may be; **third, to move forward the work of salvation for the dead.**"*

You heard that right. They believe that they can save those who have died. This is more than what the Catholics promote with the way they pray for the dead. They make the outrageous claim that they can perform "Temple ordinances" – like baptism – on behalf of a dead person and that person can choose to receive or accept the benefits of those ordinances and their salvific effects. The basis of this false doctrine hinges on what this verse means

"By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;" (1Pe 3:19)

I'm not going to get into an exposition of this passage now, but suffice it to say you've got to put it on a taffy puller to make it mean what the Mormons do, that Christ, between his death and resurrection, converted souls in hell who then went and still go about preaching to the rest of the souls in hell (so that they can receive the Gospel), and when their relatives do just the right magic trick back home, it will save them and they will get out of hell at the judgment day. This drives Mormons to nearly obsess over genealogy so they can determine which ones need saving, just ignoring Paul's admonition against such behavior! I did not make this stuff up, I promise.

This silliness drives home the utter nonsense of the entire religion. I will give them at least some credit for carrying forward with full commitment the lie of free will. After all, why should it end after death? What power does God have to limit it, if He gave us free will to decide our own salvation? Mormons may be the most consistent in their pursuit of the lie, at least.

It seems to me that it is one thing to call themselves Christian and keep to His original words with some claim He revealed something additional later. It's still specious, but to completely ignore simple truths provided in His original revelation and supplant them with contradictory ideas? That's what they do here, and by definition that wouldn't be Christianity. Christ's word teaches plainly

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" (Heb 9:27)

There is nothing to be done for a soul once it departs this earthly plane. The "but after this the judgment" is a statement of a conclusive end with no further change. We have further confirmation of this in Christ's telling us about Lazarus and the rich man. It is important to pay attention to all the details here, and embrace the information given:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (Luk 16:19-31)

I've made the point before that this isn't a parable; Christ is speaking in facts. When He speaks in parables, He makes that clear. The Mormons will argue that this would be a description of conditions before Christ descended into the depths and sent His gospel among the dead. One obvious problem with this argument is that you thereby make Christ's words pointless; it doesn't address the obvious contradiction to the doctrine when Abraham says nothing about the rich man hearing Moses and the prophets to fix his situation, nor does he say anything about him being saved by his brothers "temple ordinances" so it's a new method of salvation.

For me, Mormonism drives home the point that putting "Christ" on a building doesn't make it a Christian church. The whole religion is a more detailed and deceptive version of the "traditions of men" so many false Christian groups follow. It is more offensive because of their attempt to put the imprimatur of Christ directly onto the fiction of the book of Mormon, claiming it to be a revelation He uniquely gives to their "prophets". Like the Jews, they are puffed up in their fables, expecting others to just accept them as truth.

There are a ton of other strange fictions involved in Mormonism, like their magic underwear, that it really doesn't do much to dig into. They are all based on the same insane will-worshipping, free-will-based ramblings of Joseph Smith and those who followed in his footsteps. So let us move along.

The Jehovah's Witnesses were effectively founded in 1872 by Charles Taze Russell, an independent and somewhat controversial Adventist preacher who rose to prominence during what is sometimes called the Great Disappointment. The Adventist movement (a grouping of various churches and organizations focused on the return of Christ) had been preaching that they had calculated the return of Christ to occur in 1843 or 1844. When that didn't happen, the Adventist movement splintered into a number of different factions, all with various and sundry beliefs and doctrines.

Russell preached a number of things that still hold as core doctrines for Jehovah's Witnesses including:

- There is no Godhead or Trinity, there is only Jehovah
- Christ holds no deity and while He is the Son of God, He holds only the place of firstborn child amongst all Jehovah's created beings
- The Holy Spirit is Jehovah's active force in the world, not a being
- There is no hell, those who do not confess belief in Jehovah alone as God will be annihilated at death
- The second coming began in 1874 with something they call a "Millennial Dawn", which was supposed to result in Christ's visible return in 1914

Though dropping the visible 1914 return, they still hold onto the idea His return has already begun.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have a much greater focus on the return of Christ than most denominations, though it is hard to find a right or truly Scripturally based doctrine in their writings about it outside of Christ returning.

They present, for instance, that the 144,000 are not actually of the tribes of Israel but are rather 144,000 co-rulers with Jehovah in heaven, while the rest of those who have chosen to follow Jehovah (as the only God) will live on a restored earth. Everyone else will just go into oblivion.

The Jehovah's Witnesses lay claim to being Christian from these statements:

- *We try to follow closely the teachings and behavior of Jesus Christ – 1 Peter 2:21*
- *We believe that Jesus is the key to salvation, that “there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved.” – Acts 4:12*
- *When people become Jehovah's Witnesses, they are baptized in the name of Jesus – Matthew 28:18, 19*
- *We offer our prayers in Jesus' name – John 15:16*
- *We believe that Jesus is the Head, or the one appointed to have authority, over every man – 1 Corinthians 11:3*

This all looks really nice with Scriptural references to bolster their points. It ignores the fact that Christ's authority is founded in His deity, not in being created! It also ignores this:

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**. The same was in the beginning with God.” (Joh 1:1-2)*

When confronted with this what they seem to resort to is “that's a bad translation” and that it should be translated as “the Word was a god”, claiming the same word is translated as angel other places.

I can't sugar coat this – it is a bald-faced lie. No translation I find makes this plausible even with mirrors and a new coat of paint with really thick lenses to look through.

Looking at an Interlinear Bible that gives you the original Greek in a direct translation, you see it is very similar to the King James

“In beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word. This One was in beginning with God.”

It seems completely incongruous to me to claim that the Bible is the infallible and inspired word of God (which they maintain) and just ignore the simple statement in these verses. The term translated “Word” is Strong's G3056 – logos – which appears

330 times and is **never** translated angel or anything equivalent to it. The word translated “God” is G2316 – theos – and again is **never** translated as angel.

Their argument that Christ is simply the top-ranked created angel, Michael the archangel, holds no weight under this verse. And the rest of the doctrine is even worse. They claim that Christ’s body wasn’t resurrected, but rather faded into oblivion and Jehovah **recreated** Him as Michael. So it was Michael the archangel who came out of the tomb and walked amongst the Apostles, with the wounds of crucifixion on his body. Never mind that this is not resurrection as Christ proclaims Himself to be (Joh 11:25)!

They seem to hang a large part of their argument on

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” (Heb 1:4)

They focus on “made” and the “more excellent name” phrase. Matthew Henry makes a very nice point about this

“...the scripture does not give high and glorious titles without a real foundation and reason in nature; nor would such great things have been said of our Lord Jesus Christ if he had not been as great and excellent as those words import. When it is said that Christ was made so much better than the angels, we are not to imagine that he was a mere creature, as the angels are; the word genomenos [the word translated made] when joined with an adjective, is nowhere to be rendered created, and here may very well be read, being more excellent”

Scripture makes this point very plain. Jesus is above the created angels, not on par with them. No created angel sits at God’s right hand

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?” (Heb 1:13)

The point Paul is making in Hebrews is that Christ is above all, not because He is a created being who has been **named** above the other creatures, but because as God, He is inherently above them!

This is the crux of their religion, friends. It is a stack of lies built on deception founded in the Satanic free will treachery. I don’t know that the time required to assess and unravel all of the lies is worth your energy. This is simply not Christianity.

The last group we will examine is the Seventh Day Adventists. Coming into being during the same so-called “religious awakening” that spawned Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Seventh Day Adventists splintered away from William Miller, the Adventist preacher responsible for the loud claims Christ was returning in 1843 or

1844. When he was wrong, his leadership basically collapsed, and a number of Adventist groups were founded with some eventually consolidating into the modern Seventh Day Adventist organization.

To their credit, they work hard to make their beliefs well understood, calling them their “Twenty-Eight Fundamental Beliefs”.

They open the listing of these beliefs with this awesome language

“Revision of these statements may be expected at a quinquennial General Conference Session whenever the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth, or if better language is found to express these teachings of God’s Holy Word.”

You can stop looking in the concordance for where Paul told Timothy to organize the “quinquennial General Conference”. It’s interesting when you consider this statement to note that one of the claims Adventists make about their twenty-eight beliefs is that they are designed to uphold the “protestant conviction of *sola scriptura*”. Given how many other denominations make the same claim and yet augment, remove and give authority to whole other books, this shouldn’t be surprising to see yet another one claiming to be strict followers of only the Bible and adding to it, but it is disappointing. By the way, quinquennial means “every five years”.

So right off the bat, you’ve got to be questioning their actual Christianity if they’re going to add to His patterns and word with these “General Conferences” which drive their over-arching government and have no foundation in Scripture.

When you read through their discussion of these beliefs, they are peppered with statements like this

*“Lovingly designed as perfect beings, God created humans in His own image **with free will** and dominion over the earth. But sin crept in through temptation by Satan, the Devil. Now humanity’s perfection is tarnished, our bodies and minds corrupted. Our once-idyllic world continues to be in a constant struggle between good and evil.”*

Interestingly enough, this statement isn’t actually part of the beliefs, backed up by Bible verses. Unlike other denominations that try to justify free will from Scripture, they treat it like an axiomatic matter of fact that doesn’t need Bible backing like the moon being in the sky and grass being green. The charlatany continues, too.

They pose this answer to the question “why does humanity need salvation”

“When Adam and Eve chose to follow their own desires and curiosity instead of trusting God, it illustrated humanity’s ability to be selfish, to be deviant, to abuse the gift of free choice. That’s why the Godhead had to put Plan B into place.”

Yes, the God who created the universe needed a “Plan B”. What happens if He decides to implement Plan C, or D or double Z? How do you worship such a fickle God?

Their concept Christ’s second coming is one of the strangest I’ve come across. They maintain that Christ, from the time of His ascension until 1844, was conducting His “intercessory mission”. Again in their own words

“At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary.

In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary.

It is a work of investigative judgment, which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus.

The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection.

It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom.

This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent.”

So basically the god of the Adventists is not omniscient, and needs some Sherlock Holmes work to be done before He can actually do anything. An omnipotent God able to create the entirety of the universe and all that is in it can’t function and make determinations about His creation without hundreds of years of administrivia?

Of course, if Christ stopped interceding after 1844, what happens to all those people born from 1845 on? Is there no more intercession? Are they all just out there on their own? Sorry, that’s not clear. It’s also not clear why people can’t just continue to choose. Why is there a time limit on the choosing? When you consider that they do not believe that there is a hell, and that all people simply fall into a “sleep” until the

resurrection, and the damned simply cease to exist, what is the point? Where is the benefit in restraining yourself in this life? And of course, you're left wondering about all the references to death and hell in Scripture if it doesn't exist.

Of course there's the signature element, Saturday church, or "keeping the Sabbath". All I'm really going to say here is that if you aren't keeping it holy, as the commandment dictates, the logistics and machinations of it don't matter. If you aren't worshipping God in truth, what day you do it on is irrelevant.

This religion is a giant mass of confusion masquerading as Christianity. The contradictions, strange fictions and outright lies are all shaped in a ball of sophistry that someone who is ignorant of Scripture could quite easily be sucked into. It is possibly the cleverest of all the false denominations in how well its wrapped itself up in falsehoods, but it is clear this is not the legitimate following of Christ.

One of the most interesting things I realized going through these last three denominations is that these three, more than any others – even Catholics and Greek Orthodox – lay claim to being "the one true church". They separate themselves from other denominations and all the "interfaith" relationships others promote. They go to great lengths to maintain their differences from what is called Christianity today.

They say a lot of things similar to what we say on matters of the true church. And that gave me pause as it occurred to me. What should we learn from all this? It fell on me that there is something to consider regarding judgment and what role it has in our defending of the Gospel.

Robert Haldane in his opening remarks on Romans 2 makes this point about the Jews

"The Jews, on the contrary, had learned from their law, to judge, to condemn, and to abhor all other religions; to keep themselves at the greatest distance from those who profess them; and to regard all idolaters as under the wrath of God."

Consider the judgments made by Josiah, Gideon or Hezekiah when they destroyed the people's idols. Judgment is a crucial part even of our worship of God. We must as vociferously defend what is the true church.

How do you make yourself a peculiar people without judgment? Not judgment of yourself compared to the others, their wrongs don't make us right. That's the trouble the Jews fall into, and which Paul reminds them of as he turns from addressing the great abominations of the Gentiles to the Jews in Romans

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." (Rom 2:1)

The world abhors being judged against the plummet. They love to do exactly what Paul calls out the Jews for doing – being hypocrites. Judging according to their views, opinions, their extensions of the law while they themselves committed the same heinous sins they called others out for. Not that the sins they cried out against weren't sins! But how is one who is filthy inwardly, committing the sins they are preaching against qualified to do that preaching? How can any of these denominations decry sin in the world when they are full of adultery, sodomy, fornication, deceit, hatred, envy, strife, devoid of brotherly love, without natural affections, bearing no love for their neighbors, etc., etc.?

The simple answer is they can't, because they have no authority to do so. It is Christianity theatre. It is a thing that could befall us without proper watching, discernment and judgment.

This series of sermons has endeavored to give you knowledge and understanding of where Satan has commandeered the worship of our blessed Redeemer Christ and slapped a "Christian" sticker over the Satanic branding. To help you judge this question for yourselves – is there possibly a candlestick possibly in these organizations?

That is the question we must ask ourselves every day – if not here, where? We must judge this matter constantly, because our very souls depend upon it. There are a lot of good words flowing about the end of things, the deconstruction of this world and the ultimate return of our King, and if we are not clear on where the Body and Bride of Christ gathers – each individually and all of us collectively – I say if we are not clear that it is here, in this place, then we better find where it is quick. That means we must first judge ourselves and either correct faults or find a more perfected Bride elsewhere.

If we are not willing to judge these matters according to the standards Christ has left us – not by our own feeble analysis, but by the clear unambiguous straight plumb line standards of the Word – we're playing at religion the same as all false denominations do.

Judgment is serious work that must be taken seriously and start amongst our practices against the plumbline. That's what these denominations ignore at their own peril.

“Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.” (Psa 37:27-31)