

The Church

by Marvin Cowan

The sermon critically examines the claims of the LDS Church regarding apostasy and restoration, contrasting them with biblical teachings on the nature of the Church.

Scripture: Matthew 7:15, Matthew 16:18, Acts 2:47, Acts 11:26, Acts 20:29, Ephesians 2:20, 1 Timothy 3:1, 1 Timothy 3:8, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 1:1

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Apostasy Restoration"

Description

Marvin Cowan preaches about the differences between Mormonism and the New Testament Church, emphasizing the LDS belief in a universal apostasy from the Christian doctrine and the need for a restoration of the Gospel. He challenges the LDS claim of being the one true church and questions the validity of their prophets and apostles. The sermon delves into the discrepancies between the LDS Church's structure and the offices in the New Testament Church, highlighting the importance of aligning with the biblical teachings and qualifications for church leadership.

Transcript

"We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc."

6th Article of Faith by Joseph Smith

The above statement has led many people to conclude that Mormonism is based upon the teachings of the Bible. However, a careful examination of the origin and the structure of the LDS Church will show that Mormonism is very different from the New Testament Church. For example, Mormonism has scripture other than the Bible, a "living prophet" as the head of their church, priesthood authority that is "necessary" for God to recognize baptisms, etc. and temple rites that are essential for individual salvation. Mormonism does not claim to be a continuation of the "New Testament" church, but rather a "restoration" of it after it had been extinct for many centuries. Notice what Mormonism says about the New Testament Church.

UNIVERSAL APOSTASY

LDS Apostle B. H. Roberts wrote, "Saddening as the thought may seem, the Church founded by the labors of Jesus and His Apostles was destroyed from the earth; the Gospel was perverted; its ordinances were changed; its laws were transgressed; its covenant was, on the part of man, broken; and the world

was left to flounder in the darkness of a long period of apostasy from God... a universal apostasy from the Christian doctrine and the Christian Church took place" (D.H.C., Vol. I, Introduction, pp. 39 and 41).

Apostle Orson Pratt also declared:

Jesus made his appearance on the earth in the meridian of time, and he established his kingdom on the earth. But to fulfill ancient prophecies the Lord suffered that kingdom to be uprooted; in other words, the kingdoms of this world made war against the kingdom of God, established eighteen centuries ago, and they prevailed against it, and the kingdom ceased to exist. The great beast that John saw made war with it and prevailed against it, and human institutions, without prophets or inspired men, usurped the place of the ancient kingdom of God (J. of D., Vol. 13, p. 125).

Apostle James Talmage said:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims the restoration of the Gospel and the re-establishment of the Church as of old, in this, the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. Such restoration of re-establishment, with the modern bestowal of the Holy Priesthood, would be unnecessary and indeed impossible had the Church of Christ continued among men with unbroken succession of Priesthood and power since the 'meridian of time.' The restored Church affirms that a general apostasy developed during and after the Apostolic period, and that the primitive Church lost its power, authority, and graces as a divine institution, and degenerated into an earthly organization only... The evidence of the decline and final extinction of the primitive Church among men is found in scriptural record and in secular history (The Great Apostasy, by LDS Apostle James Talmage, Preface).

In support of their doctrine of a "universal apostasy," LDS quote such Bible texts as Amos 8:11-12; Is. 60:2; Acts 20:29-30; Gal. 1:6-9; II Thes. 2:3; I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 1:15, 3:1-5, 4:2-4; II Peter 2:1-3; Rev. 3:14-17 and 13:6-7. But, not one of those verses says that there will be a universal, complete or total apostasy, and some do not even apply to the church! The Bible teaches that some had turned away from the gospel in New Testament times, and that it would increase in the last days (II Tim. 3 and 4). But, nowhere does it teach a universal apostasy by the end of the first century or any other time! In fact, the word "apostasy" is never used in the King James Version of the Bible which is the official LDS version.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "Unto Him (God) be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end Amen" (Eph. 3:21). Could that be true if there was a universal apostasy of the church for several centuries? Jesus also said, "Upon this Rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Notice that it is Christ Himself (not mortal men) who builds His church or adds to it (Acts 2:47), and Christ has all power in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 19:6). LDS often claim that the true church must be built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, as Eph 2:20 says. This is commented upon later in this chapter under the sub-title, "Apostles." But Paul wrote, "...other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). Since Jesus Christ is the Foundation of the church, He is also part of the church! Could that church "collapse" or become extinct when the omnipotent Christ is the Foundation of it? Is it possible for Christ to lose "the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25)? Christ is called the "Good Shepherd" in John 10:11. But, any shepherd who loses all his sheep is not a very good shepherd!

Jesus must bear some responsibility for the existence of the church since God "gave Him to be head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22). The Lord Himself also nourishes (feeds) and cherishes (lovingly cares for) the church (Eph. 5:29). Jesus never told anyone else to go build His church. Instead, He declared, "I

will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). And after He ascended into heaven, Acts 2:47 declares, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." He needed no successor to build His church because He lives forever (Heb. 7:24-25). That is why Col. 1:18 declares, "He is the head of the body, the church." Notice the present tense verb is used which shows that Jesus was still Head of His church even though He had ascended to heaven many years before that was written! And Jesus is still the Head of His Church and He is adding members to it today! Thus, when LDS claim that Christ's church was prevailed against and ceased to exist, they insult the living Head of the Church!

Even Mormon scripture denies a total or universal apostasy. The B. of M. III Nephi 28 and the D. & C., Section 7, tell the story of the Apostle John and three "Nephite" apostles who were to remain alive on the earth until the second coming of the Lord! If four apostles have been on earth since the time of Christ, a universal apostasy could not have taken place during that time according to President Joseph Fielding Smith, the 10th Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the LDS Church. He said, "As long as one elder remains on earth today he would have the priesthood and could organize the church even though all of the apostles and first presidency, etc., were killed off" (Latter Day Prophets Speak by David H. Ludlow, p. 213). Can that be true of the LDS Church today and not have been true for the original church after which the LDS Church claims to be patterned? Thus, even if a universal apostasy took place, the four Apostles who never died could have restored the church without Smith's help! But, LDS claim Christ's church ceased to exist after about 100 years while Smith's is still growing after more than 150 years! Did Joseph Smith really build a better church than Jesus Christ?

RESTORATION

The LDS Church claims to be a restoration of the original New Testament church. But when something is restored, it is put back into its original form, and any change produces a substitution, not a restoration. Since the LDS Church has a First Presidency, Patriarchs, High Priests, Stake Presidency, Ward Bishopric, Priests, and so on, it is very different from the New Testament church. Therefore, it is a substitution, not a restoration of the New Testament Church. But, LDS use Acts 3:19-21, Rev. 14:6-7, and Matt. 17:11 to support their claim of being the "restoration" of Christ's church. Yet, those texts do not support LDS claims. Notice the context of each of these texts:

1. Acts 3:19-21 says "the times of refreshing" and the "times of restitution [i.e. restoration] of all things" will come when God sends Christ back at the second coming. Christ is the one who restores all things and brings the refreshing, so this is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled! As a result of Adam's sin, not only man, but all creation was cursed (Gen. 3:17; Rom. 8:19-23). "But now we see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. 2:9a), and not until Christ's return in glory will there be a "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). Joseph Smith's establishment of the LDS Church did not fulfill this.

2. Rev. 14:6-7 says the flying angel's gospel was for "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." LDS claim this text is a prophecy of the angel Moroni when he gave Joseph Smith the gold plates. But, this text excludes no one, not even the Negroid race from whom the LDS priesthood was withheld until 1978. The gospel in the hand of the angel in this text was "the everlasting gospel," not one that was lost and then restored. If the gospel is truly "everlasting," it certainly would not need to be restored! The angel also declared in verse 7 that the hour of God's "judgment is come." That did not happen when LDS claim the angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith nor has it happened yet! In Rev. 14 five more angels followed the first one with more messages of judgment, but that did not happen in the Angel Moroni Story. The LDS have

ignored the context which has resulted in a distorted interpretation.

3. Matt. 17:10-13, Mal. 3-4, Matt. 11:10-14, Luke 1:17, and John 1:19-25 show that God sent John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah to announce the Kingdom (Luke 1:17). As John the Baptist was the "Elijah" of the first coming of the Lord, so Elijah will be the forerunner (like "John the Baptist") of the second coming (Mal. 4:5-6). However, from those same verses LDS teach: 1) the gospel is to be restored, 2) the priesthood is to be restored, 3) the word "Elias" refers to messengers, 4) "messengers" are to come first and prepare the way for the Christ's second coming, and 5) John the Baptist will come in the latter days and restore the Aaronic Priesthood. Those LDS concepts are not mentioned in any of the texts cited or anywhere else in the Bible!

Since the official LDS Bible is the King James Version they also teach that Elias and Elijah are two different persons (D. & C. 110:12-16; M. W. & W., pp. 245-246). "Elijah" only appears in the Old Testament of the KJV while Elias appears only in the New Testament of the KJV. But, the word "Elias" is merely the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word "Elijah." In the King James Version of the Bible, Luke 4:25-27 and James 5:17 obviously refer to the same person and events mentioned in I Kings 17 and 18. But, in the KJV Old Testament the man is Elijah, while in the New Testament he is Elias. This is also true of Rom. 11:2-4 compared with I Kings 19:9-18. Modern English translations of the New Testament use the names Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so on, but those names are not in the King James Version of the New Testament. However, when Matt. 3:3 and John 1:23 quote the prophet Esaias, one familiar with the Bible knows that these verses are quoted from Is. 40:3. When Matt. 12:39-41 tell of the prophet Jonas being in the whale's belly three days and nights, and of Ninevah repenting at his preaching, can this be anyone other than Jonah in the Old Testament? When Jeremy is quoted in Matt. 2:17-18, it is from Jer. 31:15. If Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, why didn't God tell him that Jeremy was Jeremiah, Elias was Elijah, and so on. The Mormon god did not seem to know that proper names are transliterated in most languages, so he gave some strange revelations to Joseph Smith about these men (D. & C. 27:6-9, 76:100, 84:10-13, 110:12-14)!

LDS believe the "restoration" took place through a series of heavenly visitations to Joseph Smith beginning with the "First Vision" in 1820. Then the Angel Moroni visited Smith several times between 1823 and 1827 when the gold plates were given to Smith to translate. While translating the plates, the subject of baptism came up. Smith and Cowdery prayed and asked God about baptism. That is when John the Baptist appeared and conferred the Aaronic Priesthood on them and they baptized each other. A little later, Peter, James and John appeared and conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood on them. They then had all the Priesthood authority necessary to "restore" the one true church, which they did on April 6, 1820. Our chapters one and six discuss these "visitations" in more detail.

CLAIMS OF THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

Not only do the LDS teach that Christ's church apostatized and had to be restored, but Smith also claimed that God told him his new church was "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D. & C. 1:30). And, he said that all other churches were wrong (P. of G.P. J.S. History 1:18-19). In the B. of M., an angel told Nephi, "Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil" (1 Nephi 14:10). Therefore, members of all other churches must belong to the church of the devil! LDS Apostle Orson Pratt clearly taught that idea when he wrote:

But who in this generation have authority to baptize? None but those who have received authority in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; all other churches are entirely destitute of all authority from God; and any person who receives baptism or the Lord's Supper from their hands will highly offend God; for He looks upon them as the most corrupt of all people. Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the 'whore of Babylon' whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornication and wickedness. And any person who shall be so wicked as to receive a holy ordinance of the gospel from the ministers of any of these apostate churches will be sent down to hell with them, unless they repent of the unholy and impious act (The Seer, p. 255).

Joseph Smith also said, "Will everyone be damned, but Mormons? Yes, and a great portion of them, unless they repent, and work righteousness" (T. of P.J.S., p. 119). But, claiming that the LDS church (or any other denomination) is the "one true church," does not make it so! Anyone can make a claim like that, but proving that claim is not so easy!

LDS often claim that Christ's church will have His name in the name of the church. Then they explain that the official name of the LDS Church is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But, the LDS Church has had at least five different names (D.H.C., Vol. III, p. 24). On April 6, 1830, it was originally called the "Church of Christ" (see D. & C. 20:1, D. & C., copyright page, or 1833 Book of Commandments). On May 3, 1834, the name was changed to the "Church of Latter Day Saints" (D.H.C., Vol. II, p. 63). Still later, on April 26, 1838, it was changed to the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" as it is known today (D. & C. 115:3-4). If the church name is an earmark of being the true church, then the LDS Church could not have been true between 1834 and 1838, since neither Jesus nor Christ were in the official name of the LDS Church then!

Nowhere in the New Testament does either Christ or His disciples give an "official name" to the church. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Note that it says that they were first called Christians about 34 A.D., not in 73 B.C. as Alma 46:15 says in the B. of M. But in Acts 24:5, they are called "Nazarenes." In Rom. 16:16, they are called "the church of Christ." In I Cor. 1:2, they are identified as "the Church of God." In Heb. 12:23, their name is "the church of the Firstborn." But, the New Testament church was never called "The Church of Jesus Christ!" Thus, the name by which the disciples were known was relatively unimportant, but the gospel they preached was very important (Gal. 1:8-9). That is what ought to be important to true believers in Christ today!

The Bible teaches that born-again believers in Christ are the "body of Christ" or the church (Col. 1:18, 24; I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23). The church is not some religious denomination. Only the Lord can add to the "true church" (Acts 2:47, I Cor. 12:18) because it is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). The Greek word "ecclesia" has been translated "church" and refers to a called-out people or a congregation, including all Christians that ever lived (Matt. 16:18) as well as local assemblies of believers (Gal. 1:2). It is possible for someone to "join" a local congregation of believers without being a Christian or a true believer. Therefore, such a person is not a member of the "body of Christ" (the church). Local churches, or congregations of believers are organized for missionary activities, fellowship, study, and encouragement for Christians, but no church (or denomination) can save anyone! It is Christ of the church who saves, not the church of Christ!

LDS CHURCH OFFICES

Apostles

Mormonism claims that another earmark of the true church is its organization. LDS use Eph. 2:20 to prove that living apostles and prophets must govern the church now. It says, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone." Since LDS have twelve men they call apostles, they claim that this helps identify them as the true church. Yet, other churches also have "apostles" - including several who claim they are the true church restored by Joseph Smith! Claiming to have twelve apostles does not prove that they are really apostles or that that church is the true church!

Eph. 2:20 does not say that the church is built upon apostles and prophets. It says, "ye ... are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." The Foundation of the apostles and prophets has always been Jesus Christ! I Cor. 3:11 declares, "Other Foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In Eph. 2:20, Jesus is referred to as both "the Foundation" and "the Chief Corner Stone." That is no more unusual than the fact that He is "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), or the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (Rev. 1:8). While the apostles and prophets did the initial or foundational preaching of the gospel, Christ is the theological foundation of His Church. The Rock in Matt. 16:18 is Christ, the Rock of Ages upon which the church is built (see Rom. 9:33; I Peter 2:3-8; Deut. 32:3-31). A foundation is laid only once and then the building is built. Thus, there is only one Christ and one Foundation of the church. The context in Eph. 2:20-22 declares that Christians are the building growing into "an holy temple in the Lord." If Eph. 2:20 teaches that a new foundation of apostles and prophets is needed in every generation, then it also teaches that a new Christ is needed because He is called the "Chief Corner Stone" in the same sentence!

LDS also use Eph.4:11 to teach that apostles and prophets are offices in the church today. It says, "And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." Although the sixth Article of Faith says that LDS believe in those same offices, they have no office called "pastor" or "evangelist." LDS often say, "our bishop is a pastor and our seventies are evangelists." When Christians say that a pastor is a "prophet" in the sense of proclaiming God's Word, and that the word "apostle" can refer to a missionary or anyone "sent forth" to proclaim salvation through Christ alone, LDS reject those claims! Therefore, the LDS position is inconsistent.

Few LDS realize that the word "missionary" which they use so much is a Latin translation of the Greek word "apostle!" Nor do they know that the Greek word "apostolos" is not always transliterated as "apostle." For example, in II Cor. 8:23, it is translated as "messengers." Thus, in the broad sense of the word, Christians do have living apostles today. But, in the more limited sense of Christ's twelve apostles, Eph. 4:11 says "He (Christ) gave some apostles." Christ Himself chose the twelve (Matt. 10:1-5) "eyewitnesses" of His ministry and resurrection (II Peter 1:16; 3:2, I John 1:1-4; Jude 17-18). There are only "twelve apostles of the Lamb" and they are with Him now. Their names will be in the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14). Any apostles on earth now cannot be Christ's twelve apostles. Some question, "What about Judas Iscariot who betrayed Christ?" Acts 1:15-26 explains that Judas was replaced according to a prophecy made by King David in Ps. 69:25. The one who took Judas' place with the apostles had to be one who had been with Jesus and the other apostles from the time of Jesus' baptism until He ascended into glory (Acts 1:21-22). No one today meets that qualification. No Bible text says that any other apostle was ever replaced. The apostle James' death is recorded in Acts 12:2, but nothing is said of a successor for him.

Surely if Christ had meant for the offices of the twelve apostles to be passed on to others, He would have left a list of qualifications for them. But, their calling and work were so unique that no man today could do what they did (e.g. be eyewitnesses of Christ's entire earthly ministry - Acts 1:21-22; 10:39, 41-42; II Peter

1:15-18; I John 1:1-5; be personally called by Christ - Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16- 20; Luke 6:13; John 1:43; Eph. 4:11; be taught the gospel by Christ during His earthly ministry - Matt. 20:17; Mark 4:34; Luke 6:20).

The LDS also have ignored the order in which apostles and prophets are mentioned in Eph. 2:20 and 4:11. The order is "apostles and prophets," just like it is in I Cor. 12:28: "God set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..." But, the LDS have a prophet first over the entire Church. Then they have apostles in a secondary leadership position. Since the LDS claim to be the "restored" church, should they not have "apostles" first? When the LDS Church began, Joseph Smith was called "the first Elder" not the first apostle. (P. of G.P. J.S. History 1:72).

LDS use Eph. 4:11-13 to claim that the purpose of apostles today is to help the church come together "in the unity of the faith." However, discord in the LDS Church has resulted in over 200 splinter groups from the original organization, so the LDS apostles have not brought all to the "unity of the faith." The Mormon booklet, Denominations that Base their Beliefs on the Teachings of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet by Kate B. Carter, as well as the book Divergent Paths of the Restoration by Steven L. Shields, names many of these sects and gives a brief sketch of their history and beliefs.

Original LDS 12 Apostles

LDS claim that the true church must be built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. But, the LDS church did not have twelve apostles until five years after their church was organized! Do builders build a building for five years before laying the foundation? The LDS began ordaining their first twelve apostles on February 14, 1835 (D.H.C. Vol. II, pp. 180-200). The "three witnesses" of the B. of M. (who later apostatized) were elders and high priests in the LDS Church when they ordained the "twelve" to the higher office of "apostle." Mormons today cannot ordain someone to a higher office than what they themselves hold. The three witnesses of the B. of M. conferred the office of apostle on the twelve by "the laying on of hands" as they prayed prophetic prayers over each man separately. The apostleship they conferred is just as valid as their prophetic prayers given as they ordained the first LDS apostles. The following are some of those prophecies recorded in the D.H.C., Vol. II, pp. 188-191.

1. Lyman E. Johnson: "no power of the enemy shall prevent him from going forth and doing the work of the Lord and that he shall live until the gathering is accomplished... and he shall be like unto Enoch; ...Satan shall tremble before him and he shall see the Savior come and stand upon the earth with power and great glory." But, three years later, he apostatized and "was cut off (excommunicated) from the church" (D.H.C., Vol. III, p. 20). Furthermore, the "gathering" to Missouri (D.&C. 84:1-5), still has not taken place, and he was not like Enoch who never died (Gen. 5:24), because Johnson died in 1856 (Deseret News Church Almanac, 1989-1990, p. 49).

2. Heber C. Kimball: "many millions may be converted by his instrumentality; that angels may waft him from place to place, and that he may stand unto the coming of our Lord." But, there weren't even 85,000 Mormons when "Pres. Heber C. Kimball, first counselor to Pres. Brigham Young, died in Salt Lake City, June 22, 1868" (Essentials in Church History, p. 540). The LDS Church finally reached 1,000,000 members in 1947 which was 79 years after Kimball died. There is no record of angels "wafting" Kimball anywhere even once, and the Lord did not come before Kimball died!

3. Orson Hyde: "he 'may' (original Millennial Star, Vol. 15, p. 206 says 'shall') stand on the earth and bring souls till Christ comes... And may he be (original: 'he shall be') like one of the three Nephites." The three Nephites did not die, according to B. of M. III Nephi 28, but Orson Hyde died on November 28, 1878, in

Spring City, Utah (Church Chronology by Andrew Jensen, p. 103). Thus, Hyde did not stand on the earth till Christ came.

4. David W. Patten: "May he continue till the Lord comes." But he was shot and killed on October 25, 1838 (D.H.C., Vol. III, pp. 170-171). So, he did not continue till the Lord came.

5. Luke S. Johnson: "The nations shall tremble before him... He shall bear testimony to the kings of the earth... The Ancient of Days shall pronounce this blessing, that he has been faithful and [he shall] speak all their tongues where he shall go." But, Joseph Smith recorded, "I returned to Kirtland on or about the tenth of December (1837). During my absence in Missouri, Warren Parrish, John F. Boynton, Luke S. Johnson, Joseph Coe and some others united together for the overthrow of the church. Soon after my return this dissenting band openly and publicly renounced the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (D.H.C., Vol. II, p. 528). If the prophecy was true, Luke Johnson was "faithful" when he renounced the LDS Church! There is no record of any nation trembling before him or of him bearing testimony to the kings of the earth or speaking many foreign languages.

6. William E. M'Lellin: "He may be spared until the Saints are gathered; ... the tempter shall not overcome him... his days may be prolonged until the coming of the Son of Man." But M'Lellin died April 24, 1883 (Deseret News Church Almanac 1995-1996, p. 51), and the Saints still haven't gathered (to Missouri) more than 100 years after his death. Thus, his days were not prolonged until the Son of Man came. It also sounds like the tempter overcame him because Joseph Smith said, "William E. M'Lellin was finally excommunicated from the church at Far West. Thence forward he took an active part in the persecution of the Saints in Missouri" (D.H.C., Vol. III, pp. 31-32).

7. John F. Boynton: "Thou shalt overcome all evils that are in the world... and in the flesh." But, Boynton was excommunicated from the LDS Church just two and a half years after this prophecy, in the fall of 1837 (Deseret New Church Almanac, 1995-1996, p. 51) See Luke S. Johnson prophecy (#5) for more about Boynton. Why did the LDS Church excommunicate Boynton if he overcame all evils in the world?

8. William Smith: "He shall be preserved and remain on earth until Christ shall come to take vengeance on the wicked." But he was excommunicated on October 19, 1845. He died November 13, 1893, at the age of 82 (Deseret News Church Almanac, 1995-1996, p. 51). The Lord still has not come to take vengeance on the wicked.

It does not take a theologian to see that all these are false prophecies. Heber C. Kimball said, "after we had been ordained by these brethren (the three witnesses), the First Presidency (including Joseph Smith) laid their hands on us and confirmed these blessings and ordinations, and likewise predicted many things which should come to pass" (Times and Seasons, Vol. VI, p. 868).

Can a true prophet of God "confirm" false prophecies? Or can "true apostles" be ordained by men giving false prophecies as they ordain them apostles? Yet, that is how the LDS ordained their first "Twelve Apostles." And, every LDS Apostle today was ordained by another LDS Apostle who ultimately was ordained by one of the original twelve LDS Apostles!

Today when a Mormon apostle dies, the remaining apostles select a successor who must be accepted by a vote of the membership at their annual or semi-annual conference. But, the apostles Christ chose were apostles whether or not anyone recognized them as such! Furthermore, Christ's apostles were not excommunicated as were half of the original LDS apostles!

Since Mormonism began, the LDS have had around ninety "twelve apostles." Today they have twelve apostles plus three men in the First Presidency who were apostles when they were chosen to be in the First Presidency. That makes fifteen apostles - not twelve. Their scripture also says that the Apostle John and the three Nephite apostles never died (B. of M. III Nephi 28; D. & C. 7:1-8). That makes four more apostles to count! Because the three Nephites are called "disciples" in the B. of M., some LDS claim that they were not apostles. But, if they were not apostles, Jesus established His church in America without "apostles and prophets." Therefore the B. of M. is a record of an apostate church or it is not necessary to build the church upon "apostles and prophets" as the LDS now teach! On the other hand, if the twelve B. of M. disciples were apostles, Jesus had twelve in Palestine and twelve in America at the same time. Therefore, the "true church" had 24 apostles, not twelve!

II Cor. 11:13 warns of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." Jesus also commended the Church at Ephesus, saying, "thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). Since the Bible warns about false apostles, those who claim to be apostles should be "tried" even as the church at Ephesus tried them!

Prophets

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "Apostles and prophets are the foundation upon which the organization of the true Church rests" (M.D., p. 606). He also said, "In this day and age true prophets will be members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (M.D., p. 608).

An editorial in the Deseret News "Church News" declared, "One of the signs of the true Church of Jesus Christ is the presence of living prophets who direct its work under the guidance of heaven" (September 3, 1966, p. 16).

And President Elaine Cannon of the LDS Young Women declared, "When the Prophet speaks... the debate is over" (Ensign, August, 1979, p. 2). Mormon scripture also teaches that only one man on earth at a time can receive revelation for the whole church, "But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., for he receiveth them even as Moses" (D. & C. 28:2; see also D. & C. 43:3, 132:7).

But, some Old Testament prophets, like Isaiah, Micah and Hosea, were contemporaries. If the LDS are truly a "restoration" of the way God worked in ancient times, why can't they have two or three or more prophets at the same time?

LDS also use Amos 3:7, which says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." They claim this text shows that God must have a prophet on earth through whom He can reveal His message. But, if God does nothing without revealing it to the LDS prophet, then that prophet should know everything God is going to do! However, history shows that the LDS Prophets did not know everything God was about to do or else they ignored what God revealed! For example, did Prophet Brigham Young know in advance about the winter storm that killed so many Mormon pioneers on their way to Salt Lake? And was he forewarned about the plague of crickets that LDS claim destroyed the crops soon after the pioneers settled in the Salt Lake Valley? If the LDS prophet knew in advance about these and other disasters, why did he not warn anyone else? What good did it do for God to warn a prophet who told no one else about it? That kind of "revelation" has exactly the same value as no revelation at all!

The word "nothing" in Amos 3:7 must be interpreted by the context. Amos 3:1-7 really refers to God bringing judgment against His people Israel because of their sin. And He says He will do "nothing" (to punish or judge them) without warning them first. The Bible shows He did what He said He would do.

LDS claim Eph. 2:20 and 4:11 shows the necessity of prophets and apostles today. The New Testament does speak of prophets in Acts 11:27-28, 13:1, 15:32, and 21:10. But, the word "prophet" refers to any proclaimer of God's truth in the New Testament. In that sense the church today does have living prophets on the earth. But, in the sense of the Old Testament prophetic office like Isaiah or Jeremiah, Jesus declared, "The law and prophets were until John [the Baptist]: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16; see also Matt. 11:13). The Bible also says, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1-2).

And, Jesus declared, "...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him (man) in the last day" (John 12:48). Note that the verbs are in the past tense. Thus, men will be judged in the future by what Jesus already taught during His earthly ministry and not by what some future "prophet" claims is God's message! Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Again He said, "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11). Are these warnings only for non-LDS people? For further information about prophets, see our chapter entitled, "More LDS Scripture and Revelation."

Other Church Offices

Phil. 1:1 says, "to all the saints... with the bishops and deacons." In the Philippian church (and other New Testament churches), there were saints (laymen), deacons, and bishops. The words "bishop" and "elder" are used interchangeably and refer to the same office (Acts 20:17-18; Titus 1:5, 7. The terms "overseers, presbyters and pastors" also refer to that same office). Sometimes the Greek word "presbuteros" is translated "elder" in the sense of an older person as in I Tim. 4:1-2.

Only the offices of deacon and bishop (pastor) have qualifications listed in the New Testament, but the LDS Church does not meet those requirements. The deacon's qualifications include being "the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own house well" (I Tim. 3:8-13). Few 12-year-old "deacons" in the LDS Church could meet those qualifications! I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 give the qualifications for bishops or elders, and show it involves a spiritual ministry of instruction. But, D. & C. 107:68 says that the LDS bishop's work is "administering all temporal things." Thus, the LDS have ignored the Biblical qualifications while they insist they are the "restored church."

They have also added offices which have Biblical names, but which were never "offices" in the New Testament church, and therefore, no qualifications were given for them. Examples of these are the LDS offices of teacher, priest, high priest, seventy, and patriarch. For years they also had a church patriarch, assistant apostles, and stake seventies, but these have been discontinued.

They have also added offices which have neither Biblical names nor qualifications, such as president of the church, first presidency, stake presidency, and presiding bishopric. Such offices refute their claim of being "the restored church," because these offices were never in the New Testament church. Therefore, the LDS Church is a poor substitution for the New Testament church rather than a restoration of it!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/marvin-cowan/the-church/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net