

WORDS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: MORMONISM

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I Kings 18:21, “*And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*”

2 Peter 2:1, “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”*

As we continue our studies on the cults we have considered for our next inquiry the group known as Mormons. We gave somewhat of an introduction last time on Mormonism. As I prepared this study I vacillated back and forth whether my title to our study was too harsh or unkind, but the more I studied the teachings of Mormonism, maybe my title is too gentle or too lenient, I believe you will agree with me by the time we are finished. From the outset, I want it understood that I do not hate Mormons; they are humans with souls in need of the Lord Jesus Christ, so we don't hate them, but we do hate their teachings and doctrines which deceive many. Now, the reason I entitled my studies on the Mormons, Words of Mass Destruction, is because they seek to deceive people because **THEY** call themselves Christians. We don't call them Christians because they are not, but they call themselves Christians, thus, making this group very dangerous. The Jehovah Witnesses, don't call themselves Christians, they don't even believe you have to be born again. But Mormons label themselves Christian, and use the Christian lingo but with a tweak by means of a disclaimer that Christianity had apostatized and they had to restore the church. Now, does it make any sense to you that if someone believed that Christianity had apostatized and all its creeds and teachings were but an abomination to God, that you would call yourself a CHRISTIAN? Why even try appeal to the masses that you are mainline Christian, why not just call yourselves Mormons without seeking the approval of the general public by saying you're Christian? Why, for the purpose of DECEPTION! To be accepted within the general public, therefore my title fits them to a 'T,' Words of Mass Destruction! Hopefully by the time I'm through you will see the awful mask of deception they seek to portray to the public audience. Whether it is on the radio, on TV by literature, they present themselves as something they definite are not: CHRISTIANS!

Please pass out those handouts on Mormonism, but please read them with me when I make references to it or read it at home later. We shall make reference to a couple things only and this handout is for your own edification.

When you start seeing the teachings they ascribe to and promote, you will be appalled and mad that you almost bought in, that perhaps they just might be Christians. When Mormonism teaches that there are errors and mistakes in the Bible, but that the words of Joseph Smith, their Book of Mormon, their Doctrines and Covenant and their Pearl

of Great price are without error, what can you say? If I believed that there were errors and mistakes in the Bible, I don't think I would want to call myself a Christian. This is why they are so deceiving and so misleading, because they know what they are saying and they know what they are promoting and they know right well that they used this to convert you to their beliefs.

Therefore, I believe that the words of Peter are so clear and applicable in describing the Mormons and all groups like them, 2 Peter 2:1, "*But there were false prophets also among the people, **even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.** 2 **And many shall follow their pernicious ways;** by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and **their damnation slumbereth not.**"*

Peter tells us that there were false prophets already among the people, but that there shall also be false teachers among you or if you wish even among us even in our day. Notice carefully how Peter says they would bring in their false teachings? Peter says, "PRIVILY," they will bring in damnable heresies. The word 'privily,' in the Greek is '***pareisage*** - παρεισάγω' It is a compound word with the preposition '*para*,' which basically means at the side of, beside or by and the word '*eiságo*,' which means to introduce, to lead into the place which is not being expressly or stated, to bring in by the side of craftiness or deceit in a secret manner. In essence, bringing in someone under false pretenses, like a spy or secret agent craftily putting them in an enemy camp. Lenski says that the verb of this word means, "*To bring in sneakingly, covertly, so that unwary, simple people will not note what these teachers are bringing in.*" Like Mormons, they come around parading as Christians in order that they can **secretly introduce**, 'PRIVILY,' introduce error alongside of the truth to the unsuspecting person, it is a subtle deception to which the master of subtlety, the Devil himself enjoys using them. Reminds me of the words of Christ in the parable of wheat and tares, Matthew 13:24 & 25, "*Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, **his enemy came** and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*" False prophets like Joseph Smith and the current Mormon leader presenting clever and catchy words to introduce their errors secretly. False doctrine always begets bondage never freedom!

Jude also has a similar warning, as a matter of fact Jude almost repeats verbatim what Peter wrote, someone once said, Peter wrote false prophets were coming and Jude says, there here! Verse 4 of Jude says, "*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*" False prophets always turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, that is, shamelessness, insolence and unbridled lust in excess, and they all deny the **ONLY** Savior of sinners, our Lord Jesus Christ. I love the way John Calvin translates this last part of verse 4, "*Denying Christ, who is only God and only Lord.*" The NIV reads, "*For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless*

men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” Thomas Manton says this about the phrase “...and denying...” “This is done either openly or covertly: openly when Christ is clearly renounced and opposed; covertly, Christ is denied by...heretical insinuations striking at his person and natures at a distance.” Jude uses the same word Peter did for ‘privily,’ It is translated in the KJV, ‘unawares,’ but Jude uses the verb form of the Greek, “**pareisdy(n)ō** - παρεισδύ(ν)ω” which means to enter secretly, slip in stealthily or to steal in.

Whether it’s privily or creep in unawares, they do it purposely to deceive and mislead many to the condemnation of their own souls, and the souls of their followers unless they recover themselves by the grace of God from the snare of the Devil. Remember Peter says that these bring in “...**damnable heresies** ...” that is, they secretly introduce destructive or damnable doctrines. From Precept Austin web page, they quote Adam Clarke, “*Damnable heresies - Heresies of destruction; such as, if followed, would lead a man to perdition. And these they will bring in privately-cunningly (**pareisago**), without making much noise, and as covertly as possible.*” The Greek word for ‘damnable,’ is “**apoleia** - ἀπώλεια.” A compound word which comes from, “apo,” that means a marker of separation or away from and “olethros,” which means destruction of persons or objects like vessels, money or institutions and of ruin and death, but never annihilation. When combined it speaks of the awful and utter ruin of destruction which consists of eternal misery in hell. The false teachings of these imposters are destructive to the soul, that’s why Peter calls them “...**damnable heresies** ...”

This is not a light matter, thus we must take a stand upon the truth of God and expose these deceivers. Now, this does not mean we do it in an ugly or in mean way, no, we do it in a very cordial way, but nonetheless, we must expose them for their false teaching and deceptions. We must apply the principle of Paul in Eph. 4:15, “*But speaking the truth in love...*” Also in 2 Tim.2:24-26, “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*” Dear brethren, it is not our purpose to just prove them wrong, but for the purpose of pointing them and winning them to Christ.”

Like Paul, Peter, Jude and John our Lord Jesus Christ did not hold back when it came to deceivers and false teachers. He exposed them for what they were, turn to Matthew 23:13-39, powerful words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, Peter seeks to warn and instruct us that when it comes to false teachers and false prophets, the modus operandi of these wicked men and women is to deceive and mislead by lies just like their father the devil. Notice the words of Jesus Christ in John 8:44, “*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*” We must remember that their

teachings are damnable doctrines, yea deadly doctrines which they speak as they come deceivingly as wolves in sheep clothing! Christ again says in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Peter says that these false prophets are those who come as Christ said wolves in sheep's clothing who seek to pass themselves off as Christian teachers. Jesus in John 10:10 also warns us that the devil himself comes as a thief, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy..." In like manner the devil's own children come as false teachers and false prophets, to steal, to kill and to destroy the souls of man!

We have seen before that there are at least 4 major conflicts with the cults, besides others and these are:

- THEIR VIEW OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST OR THE TRINITY.
- THEIR VIEW ON THE AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.
- THEIR VIEW ON SALVATION, THEY HOLD TO A WORKS SALVATION.
- THEIR VIEW ON HELL.

The Bible over and over emphasizes the importance of not being deceived. There is a sense that we are all born into this world deceived and separated from God, Jer. 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" But what I am talking about is after we acquire knowledge of the truth in the grace of salvation, that we are warned not to be deceived. Notice the many verses that speak on this topic.

- Mark 13:5 "And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest **any man** deceive **you**."
- Ephesians 5:6 "Let **no man** deceive **you** with vain words..."
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3 "Let **no man** deceive **you** by any means..."
- 1 Corinthians 3:18 "Let **no man** deceive **himself**..."
- Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, **by the sleight of men**, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
- Romans 16:18 "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and **fair speeches deceive the hearts** of the simple."

One of the basic features in a cult is the essence of deception, whether they know it or not. The cults are extremely evangelistic as they go around propagating their false doctrines with such a tenacity which is why they attract so many followers. They are so persuasive with their "...*fair speeches...*" in deceiving the hearts of the simple. Again, because the cultists believe so strongly in good works for their salvation, which they trust will save them in the end, they are very active in recruiting new converts.

Thus, we have sought to use a phrase that I believe is very applicable to the Mormons with their fair speeches of deception: "WORDS OF MASS DESTRUCTION!" which destroy many souls. Let us therefore arm ourselves and "*Stand...having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*" Eph. 6:14 -17. Or as our Lord Jesus Christ in His Temptation by Satan would rebuke Satan by maintaining, confirming yea, affirming with great boldness, "...IT IS WRITTEN." We must by the Word of Truth confront and expose cults and any false teaching. We must do this with boldness, assertiveness and with compassion in meekness instructing them from the Word of God that perhaps God will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. We see that 1 Thess.1:9, how they turned from idols to serve the Living and True God, notice the means used for this in chapter 2 and verse 13, "*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*" Therefore by the blessed Word of God we shall expose the false teachings of the cults and in this case MORMONISM!

The epistle of 1 John is a good book to use in confronting cults, I have inserted 5 questions in my Bible in 1 John to ask cults when they come to our door or cross our paths in general:

- 1. What do they believe about Christ's pre-existence?**
- 2. What do they believe about Christ's incarnation?**
- 3. What do they believe about Christ's deity?**
- 4. What do they believe about Christ's death?**
- 5. What do they believe about Christ's resurrection?**

Let us now consider some material regarding cults. I found the following information useful which I wanted to share with you. This is from the "Biblical Discernment Ministries," webpage, hosted by Rick Miesel. He uses various sources which are credited at the end of this material.*

To be classified as a cult, *not* all of the following characteristics have to be present, but in most cases, in one form or another, all of them will be:

- 1. Extrabiblical Authority:** All cults deny what God says in His Word as true. Cults have shifted their theological point of authority away from God's full and final written Word, the Bible, to their own unique, self-promoting opinions about the Bible; they generally will use parts of the Bible but will have their own unique scripture which is considered to be superior to the Bible. While some cult groups give token respect for the Bible and go through the motions of accepting the authority of Scripture, in reality, they honor the group's or leader's novel *interpretation* of Scripture as normative.

- 2. Works Salvation/Legalism:** Cults teach that eternal life depends upon something other than the Atonement; i.e., faith in the atoning, finished work of Christ on the cross is deemed *not* to be sufficient (usually replaced with human works and human responsibility). Rather than relying on the grace of God alone for salvation, the salvation message of the cults always boils down to required obedience to, or abstention from, certain obligations and practices (some even including obedience to the Old Testament law).

- 3. No Assurance of Salvation:** The issue of a cult member's salvation is never settled, but is constantly affected by the changing circumstances of life; in this way, cult leaders are able to produce continued obligation and spiritual bondage, rather than spiritual freedom.

- 4. Guru-Type Leader/Modern Prophet:** The cult leader is looked to as the infallible interpreter of Scripture, specially appointed by God to be a special saint, guru, or contemporary messiah, and thereby, has divine authority that must not be violated. Cultists almost always quote their leader rather than the Bible. The cult's adherents often expound the virtues of the founders and seek to cover the founder's sins and wickedness.

- 5. Vacillating, Ambiguous Doctrines/Spiritual Deception:** In order to gain favor with the public, and thereby aid in the recruitment of new members, cult "doctrine" tends to be characterized by many false or deceptive claims concerning the cult's true spiritual beliefs (e.g., Mormons are not quick to reveal their belief that God was a man, who has now become the God of planet Earth).

- 6. Exclusivity from/Denunciation of Other Groups:** Each cult group, regardless of what other doctrines are taught, will all have this one common idea -- "The Only True Church Syndrome." The members of each specific organization have been taught that their church, organization, or community, is the only true group and that all other groups are false. The group's leaders will explain that it is impossible to serve God without being a member of the specific group. Moreover, when the cult leader announces himself as the true "Messiah," all others are declared to be dishonest, deceitful, and deluded, and must be put down; alternative views are denounced as being satanic and corrupt. Persecution is welcomed, and even glorified in, as "evidence" that they are being persecuted for righteousness sake.

Thus, if a member decides to leave the group, they have been told that they are not simply leaving an organization, but rather they are leaving God and His only true organization. Hence, for a member of a cult who has been in a group for any length of time, the action of leaving the group is much more difficult than what most Christians understand. To leave the group is, in the minds of the cult tantamount to leaving God.

7. Claims of Special Discoveries/Additional Revelation: Acceptance of new, contemporary, continual revelations that either deny the Bible or are allowed to explain it. The fundamental characteristic of Christianity is that it is historical, not dependent upon private knowledge and secret, unconformable relationships, while the almost universal basis of cult religion is the claimed exclusive revelation that one person has supposedly received. Rather than conforming to Biblical rules of evidence (2 Cor. 13:1), cult leader revelations almost always emanate from hallucinations, visions, dreams, private discoveries, etc. These new revelations often become codified as official written "scripture" of the cults (e.g., *The Book of Mormon*), and are considered as valid as that of the apostles (and even more relevant because they are given in these end times).

8. Defective Christology: Cults always have a false view of the nature of the Person of Jesus Christ; a cult will usually deny the true deity of Christ, His true humanity, His true origin, or the true union of the two natures in one Person.

9. Defective "Nature of Man": Most cults do not see man as an immortal being; instead they see him either as an animal without a soul or as a being which is being perfected to the point of becoming a god. They usually do not see man as a spirit clothed in a body of flesh awaiting the redemption of body and soul.

10. Out-Of-Context Scripture Use as Proof-Texts/Segmented Biblical Attention: Cults tend to focus on one verse or passage of the Bible to the exclusion of others, and without regard for the context in which Scripture is given (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:29 used by Mormons to justify baptism for the dead). In addition, cults have made an art form out of using Christian terminology, all the while pouring out their own meanings into the words.

11. Erroneous Doctrines Concerning Life After Death and Retribution: Covering the gamut from soul sleep to annihilationism to purgatory to universalism to the progression to godhood, cults invariably deny the existence of a final judgment of, and a final "resting" place for, the unrighteous.

12. Entangling Organization Structure: The less truth a movement represents, the more highly it seems to have to organize itself; the absence of truth seems to make necessary the application of the bonds of fear. Cults often demand total commitment by their converts to an organizational involvement that entangles them

in a complicated set of human restrictions, giving the impression of passionate and often irrational devotion to a cause.

13. Financial Exploitation: The cultic practitioner strongly implies that money contributed to the cause will earn the contributor numerous gifts, powers, and abilities, and in many cases, outright salvation.

14. Pseudo mystical/Spiritistic/Occultic Influence: Occult influence is many times found in either the origin of the group and/or in its current practices.

* (The information herein was adapted from the following sources: (1) *The Marks of a Cult*, Dave Breese; (2) "Roman Catholicism: Is It A Cult?," *Media Spotlight*, Albert James Dager; (3) *What They Believe*, Harold J. Berry; (4) *Cults and the Church of Christ*, George Faull and Brooks Alexander of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project; (5) "Patterns in the Cults," Rick Branch (Watchman Fellowship Profile, 1994); and (6) *Examining & Exposing Cultic & Occultic Movements*, Jack Sin, April 2000, pp. 14-16; 73-78.)

The following is also copied: **Difference from cult: Occult**

“The term, “occult” comes from the Latin *occultus* or “hidden.” Generally the word is used of secret or mysterious supernatural powers or magical, religious rituals. The word “occult” in this publication is used to describe any attempt to gain supernatural power or knowledge apart from the God of the Bible. Generally it refers to witchcraft, Satanism, neo-paganism, or various forms of Psychic discernment (astrology, séances, palm reading, etc).”

Cults are basically everywhere. Some are mainstream and widely accepted like the Mormon organization. Others are complete isolationists who seek to hide from the general population. There’s no question that cults are growing and flourishing. Some create many problems like the David Koresh and Branch Davidians group which were an offshoot of the Seven Day Adventists. Some have caused great suffering and death by suicide, like Jim Jones, founder of the Peoples Temple group in the 1970’s and the Heaven’s Gate group in 1997. There are many cults in our day and hopefully these studies will inform and equip you if ever confronted by these cults.

Next we shall look at the history and beginnings of MORMONISM.