



# The LifeLine



Autumn 2021

“Contending for the faith”

lifeline2rlds.org

Carol's Corner...

## The Best Christmas Gift

I was born in 1928 in Independence, Mo., the 6<sup>th</sup> of 7 children—2 boys and 5 girls. I had a wonderful childhood on our 4-acre farm, complete with a big garden, dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits, pigs, cows and a Billy goat.

Mama was born into the RLDS church, Daddy was a convert from the Church of England. All of us kids were raised in “the church” and loved it. So many good memories from those early years.

Christmas was an extra special time as we were growing up. On Christmas morning we had to make our beds before we came downstairs. Then all 7 of us would line up at the top of the stairs, and as Mama played Christmas music on the piano, we marched down the steps into the living-room to the Christmas tree by the fireplace.

In the years since, I've thought many times of those wonderful memories. The good times we had, the gifts we received, the love and laughter we shared. It would be hard to name my favorite gift from those happy times, but now as I near the end of my life, I can wholeheartedly say that the best Christmas gift I ever received is the gift of knowing Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

Receiving this gift was not easy because it meant giving up cherished beliefs I had held dear all my life. The beliefs that Joseph Smith was a prophet sent from God to restore His true church to the earth; that the *Book of Mormon* was scripture from God; that the RLDS church had living prophets who received God's revelations for today. And above all, the belief that Zion, God's kingdom on earth, would be built in the Center Place, Independence, Mo., so that Jesus could return to rule and reign.

Study and prayer resulted in me leaving the church of my youth when I discovered none of those things were true. I found that God's church had never been taken from the earth, that the Bible is truly the Word of God, and that its pages contain everything we need for salvation and living the Christian life.

As another Christmas approaches, I invite you...if you don't already know Jesus as your Lord and Savior...to give your life to Him. In return, He will give you a most precious gift—forgiveness of your sins and eternal life with Him. That is truly the best gift ever!

## Warning! False Teachers Ahead

Those of us who decided it was more important to follow Jesus rather than Joseph Smith, likely came to that decision at different times and in different ways. For some, it was the different versions of the First Vision account. Others realized that Joseph Smith wasn't a prophet as he claimed after all. Still others couldn't reconcile Joseph Smith's teachings with the Bible.

But Joseph Smith as a false teacher wasn't anything new. First century apostles and church leaders had to deal with teachers of Gnosticism who had a flawed view of Christ and valued personal spiritual experiences over the word of God. As a result, New Testament writers wrote at length warning first century Christians about false teachers. What follows is a sampling of those warnings:

The Apostle Paul admonished the Galatians, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be eternally condemned!” (Galatians 1:8)

Later in the Bible Paul stands up to the false teachings and heresies being spread in the Colossian church. These beliefs included strict rules about what kinds of food and drink were permissible, angel worship, secret knowledge and reliance on human wisdom and understanding.

In 1 Timothy 1:4, Paul urged his young protégé to command certain people in the Ephesian church not to teach false doctrines or to devote themselves to fables and endless genealogies. He continued in 1 Timothy 4:1, “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.”

Continuing in 6: 3-5, Paul exposed the intent of the false teachers when he wrote, “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”

In Peter's second letter he shared, “In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.” (2 Peter 2:3)

During the first two centuries the gospel was taken from place to place by traveling evangelists and teachers. Believers customarily took these missionaries into their homes and gave them provisions when they left to help them on their journey. Since false teachers also relied on this practice, 2 John was written to urge discernment in supporting traveling teachers; otherwise, someone might unintentionally contribute to the propagation of heresy rather than truth.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”

Colossians 2:8

Likewise, Jude felt that he must warn his readers about certain immoral men circulating among them who were perverting the grace of God. “For certain individuals

whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” (Jude 4)

When one reads these warnings about false teachers from the first century, we see that Joseph Smith wasn't anything unusual, rather he was just an 1830's version of first century false teachers. When one compares Biblical teachings with those of Joseph Smith, one sees how instead of complementing one another, they contradict one other. Here are some examples:

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans he writes, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” He unequivocally does not exclude the infirm, children or any other special group. But Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon* states in Moroni 8:9, “...wherefore little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin.” This verse shows that Joseph Smith denied the Biblical doctrine of original sin. The only individual in the Bible said to be without sin is Jesus Christ.

In revelations allegedly received by Joseph Smith, in the *Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C) (RLDS: 55:1b, 83:10c) the remission of sins [forgiveness] occurs through water baptism. However, Acts 10:43 states, “All the prophets testify about him [Christ] that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” Paul also writes in Ephesians 1:7a, “In him we have redemption

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...“False Teachers” from front

through his blood, the forgiveness of sins....” Water baptism isn’t necessary for forgiveness; accepting Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior is. Baptism is one’s public acknowledgement that they’ve come to that decision.

In another prophesy allegedly received by Joseph Smith, in D&C 12:3b we read, “Keep my commandments in all things; and if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life...” But the Bible tells us that it is not possible to save oneself through good works. In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul writes, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through

faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Joseph Smith wrote in Section 76 of the D&C that heaven consists of three kingdoms. When someone dies, which one they are assigned to depends on what he or she did or did not do while they were alive. Interestingly, the Bible is silent about heaven being subdivided in this way.

False prophets and teachers obviously were big concerns of the original apostles or they wouldn’t have written so extensively warning First Century Christians about them. As Twenty-first Century Christians we, too, need to pay attention to their warnings. In our modern world with

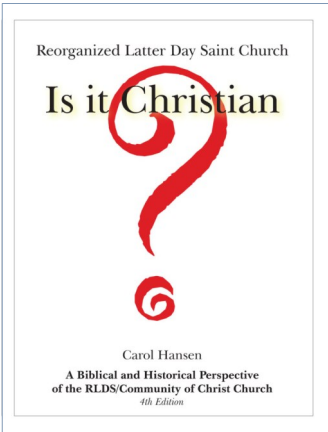
the ability to listen to preachers and teachers in person in church, on television and radio and even online, we can be even more susceptible to false teachings if we’re not careful.

So, what can we do to help us discern false teachers from Biblical ones? Many of us when we were followers of Joseph Smith did not get in the habit of reading the Bible regularly. But that is the most effective thing you can do to protect yourself from false teachers—read your Bible—preferably daily. If you’re not in a Bible study at a Christian church, get in one. If you have a strong Christian as a friend, see if they’d be willing to be your accountability partner.

If you take these steps and you hear or see something from anyone, be they an ordained minister or lay Christian, that isn’t Biblically sound or diverges from a faithful preaching of the gospel, don’t accept it outright. Instead, do a deeper study on what he or she said and be willing to challenge them. If Satan can get a pastor or small group leader to mix a drop of falsehood in with the truth of the Gospel, he can establish a foothold in your church. When we were followers of Joseph Smith, we accepted what we were taught because we trusted the person doing the teaching. As we’ve grown in our faith we realize that we can’t always trust the words of people, but we can always trust the Word of God.

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## Resources Available

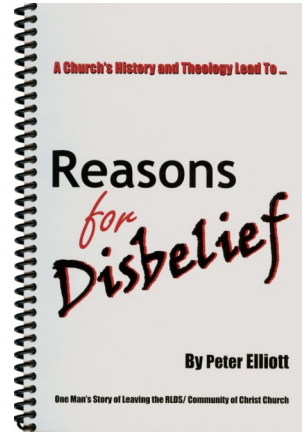


*Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church Is it Christian?* is a thoroughly documented book on the RLDS/Community of Christ church’s history, doctrine and scriptures. \$25.00 incl. postage



Our “Seeking” series of tracts. \$5.00 for all three.

A 3-year investigation into the church of his youth resulted in Peter Elliott’s book, *A Church’s History and Theology Lead To... Reasons for Disbelief*. He tells why he chose to leave the RLDS/Community of Christ. \$10.00 incl. postage



These resources are available directly from LifeLine’s website, some both in printed form and as a PDF. You can purchase copies for your pastor and for yourself at: [https://www.lifeline2rlds.org/wp/?page\\_id=540](https://www.lifeline2rlds.org/wp/?page_id=540) or by

sending a check to LifeLine Ministries to RLDS, P.O. Box 1536, Independence, MO 64055. Books on the website also include Paul Trask’s *Part Way to Utah*, *The Long Way Home* and Ron Luff’s *Faith Gone Astray*.



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