



The LifeLine



Winter 2022

“Contending for the faith”

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Carol's Corner...

My New Life in Christ

When I was growing up in the RLDS church, we didn't talk much about salvation, we talked about going to heaven. We were taught the way we got there depended on keeping the commandments, doing good works, helping others and being good enough. On Judgement Day we'd discover if we made it or not.

As a born-again Christian, I have the assurance now that when I close my eyes in death, I will open them in heaven. How do I know that? I have given my life to Jesus as my Lord and Savior. The Bible teaches that when a person does this, God gives them the gift of eternal life. (1 Jn 5:11-13)

After I had studied my way out of the RLDS church, I started to attend a small Bible Study in a private home. They were studying Ephesians 2:8 and 9:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

In my 58 years as a member of the RLDS church, I had never heard this taught.

At the end of the Bible Study, one of the ladies asked me, “Have you ever accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?” My answer was “no.” When she asked if I would like to pray with them to do that, I said “yes.” In that prayer, I confessed I was a sinner, and that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to forgive my sins. I asked Him to come into my heart to be my Lord and Savior...and He did!

After I said the prayer, I felt a peace I had never experienced before. The ladies told me that if I sincerely meant what I said in the prayer, I was now a born-again Christian and I would go to Heaven when I died.

In the intervening years, I see more clearly every day how Joseph Smith's teachings steer people away from the simple salvation message taught in the Bible, replacing Jesus' finished work on the cross with their own, ongoing works in their quest for perfection and heaven. The contrast between the religion I grew up with, and the relationship I have had with Jesus since giving my life to Him all those years ago, has been like night and day. How true are the words of the old hymn:

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.”

Praise the Lord!

Chocolate Bunnies and Easter Eggs?

The Significance of Easter

The world observes this time of year as a time to say goodbye to the cold and dark winter months and to welcome the sunshine and new life of springtime. For Christians, it is also a time of celebration for new life—the new life available to us through the Son of God. He enables us to say goodbye to the darkness and emptiness of our old lives, and to embrace the promise of a new and abundant life in Him.

Easter reminds us that while the gift of salvation is free to us—it cost Jesus His life. After being humiliated, beaten and crucified, Jesus willingly died an agonizing death on the cross to pay the price for mankind's sins. Why? Because only His blood, shed on the cross, could redeem the sinful souls of men from death—the appropriate penalty for sinning against God.

Consider the following excerpts from Hank Hanegraaff's book, *Resurrection*. “It is crucial that we understand the problem of sin. If you don't recognize that you are a sinner, you will also not realize your need of a Savior...sin is a word that describes anything that fails to meet God's standard of perfection. ...

Scripture says in order to be acceptable to God we need to be perfect...as the Bible puts it, ‘God made him [Jesus Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God’ (2 Cor. 5:21). This is the great exchange...God took our sins and placed them on Jesus Christ, who suffered and died to pay the debt we could not pay.

“...He took our sins and gave us his perfection as an absolutely free gift. We cannot earn it or deserve it; we can only live a life of gratitude for this gift that God freely offers us...you can know about Jesus Christ...but until you personally place your trust in him you will not be saved. The requirements for eternal life are not based on what you can do but on what Jesus Christ has done. He stands ready to exchange his perfection for your imperfection.”

The Bible warns there will be those who turn from the simplicity of salvation through Christ to manmade fables. “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine... They

will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” (2 Tim 4:3-4) The simple gospel of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins will not be able to hold their attention, so they will demand something more fascinating, a more stimulating and challenging doctrine in which their human achievement will help to save them.

The Bible will be perceived as outdated, simplistic, and inadequate, so [they] will become eager to listen to fables or novel religious teachings, a “different gospel”—which is no gospel at all.

“A ‘different gospel’ leaves people in their lost state. Evangelists are commanded to call people to faith in the crucified and risen Lord. Nothing else can be added and still have the gospel.” (*Disciples Study Bible*: NIV, p. 1491, Study Note Related to Gal. 1:6-2:15)

Joseph Smith has given the world a different gospel. His belief system replaces the simple gospel of the Bible with a man-made “gospel”

dependent on the good works of man instead of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The apostle Paul wrote on this subject: “...I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...not having my own

righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith...” (Phil 3:8-9)

Instead of the salvation only Jesus can give—which results in eternal life—Joseph Smith's gospel can only result in eternal separation from God.

“People who deceive others by changing the gospel to include human achievement and pride deserve eternal condemnation...The gospel must be maintained in its purity, because through clear and correct proclamation of the gospel, people are saved.” (*Disciples Study Bible*: NIV, *Ibid.*)

Becoming a Christian: Believe AND Receive Jesus

Though RLDS/COC members know about Jesus Christ, most have never received Him into their lives. You do not become a Christian

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“Easter” continued from front...

automatically by being baptized or belonging to the “one true church,” or by “keeping the commandments.” You must ask Him into your life as your personal Lord and Savior—something not taught in the RLDS church.

For those followers of Joseph Smith who are willing to forsake his teachings and instead embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ, the following scriptures provide the way:

1. Believe that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. (Jn 3:16)
2. Realize that all men have sinned, and their sin separates them from God. (Rom 3:10; Isa 59:2)
3. Recognize that the penalty for sin is death. (Rom 6:23)
4. Understand that Jesus Christ has paid that penalty for your sin. (Rom 5:8; 2 Cor 5:21)
5. Accept that Salvation is a free gift. (Eph 2:8-9)
6. Recognize that you must receive Jesus Christ to be saved. (Jn 1:12, 10:9 & 14:6)
7. Realize that when we ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we are born again, and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us to help us live our new life in

Christ. (Jn 3:3, 5-7; 1 Cor 6:19; Jn 14:26)

Receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior should be followed by baptism. Though water baptism does not save a person, it is an outward sign of the person’s inward commitment to follow Christ. As the apostle Peter pointed out, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be

baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47)

The Assurance of Salvation

If you sincerely pray and ask Jesus to come into your heart you WILL be born again into the family of God through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. And you WILL have the assurance of eternal life. “... everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (Rom 10:9). “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 Jn 5:13) Those RLDS/COC who are sincere seekers of God will find the truth, and the truth will set them free. (Jn 8:32)

That Joseph Smith had a low opinion of the Bible is undeniable. In the 1833 church newspaper, *Evening*

and *Morning Star*, while Joseph Smith was leader of the church, the following statements appeared:

- ◆ “...the bible, instead of the hearts of men, must be PURIFIED!
- ◆ ...the bible, after a period of hundreds of years, is found to be faulty and indecent.
- ◆ ...the whole work is full of errors, and unchaste expressions!”

Because Joseph Smith believed the Bible was not trustworthy, his teachings did not include the Biblical gospel—the only gospel that can offer salvation. Thus those who

choose to follow Joseph Smith’s teachings instead of the teachings of Jesus Christ, are:

“...judging themselves unworthy of Jesus’ gift of eternal life.” (Acts 13:46)

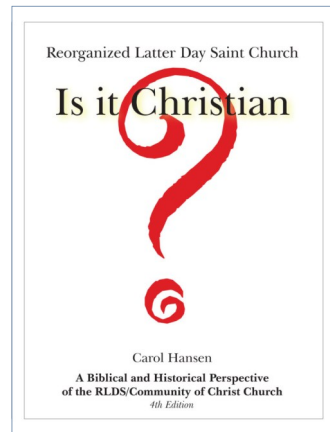
So this Easter, as others focus on chocolate bunnies and Easter eggs, let us remember the real reason for celebration: Man’s salvation is made possible by God’s love and the willingness of Jesus Christ to lay down His life for the souls of men. Jesus died so that we might live.

Thank You Lord Jesus!

“The birth of Christ brought God to man; the cross of Christ brings man to God.”

RBC Ministries, 2015

Recommended Resource



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. It is available for purchase as a book or as a PDF file at www.lifeline2rlds.org.

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