



# The LifeLine



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“Contending for the faith”

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Carol's Corner...

## Identifying the “Other Jesus”

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached... you put up with it easily enough. (2 Cor 11:4)

Who is this “other Jesus” that Paul speaks of? Consider the following:

- ◆ The Jesus of the Mormons is the spirit brother of Lucifer who progressed to Godhood;
- ◆ The Jesus of the Jehovah Witnesses is a created being called Michael the Archangel;
- ◆ The Jesus of the mind science cults (Christian Science, Unity School of Christianity, etc.) is a good man but did not have to die for the sins of mankind because they insist sin does not exist;
- ◆ The Jesus of the Seventh-Day Adventists made simply a partial atonement on the cross, covering only past sins;
- ◆ The Jesus of Catholicism shares his role as mediator between God and man with Mary.

These doctrines obviously do not reflect the Biblical Jesus. We find this to be true of the RLDS/CoC teachings as well.

When witnessing to RLDS/CoC members, we often hear them say they believe in Jesus just like we do. But upon closer examination of their scriptures and other writings, it becomes clear that the Jesus they refer to is not the Jesus of the Bible. For instance, several passages in the *Book of Mormon* present a modalistic view of Jesus. Modalism is the teaching that Jesus and God are one and the same. The *Book of Mormon* records Jesus as saying, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, I am the Father and the Son.” (Ether 1:77) Jesus said to Moroni, “He that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father.” (Ether 1:107-108) This errant teaching resulted from Joseph Smith’s misconception of the Holy Trinity, that God is eternally existent in three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This lack of understanding obscures the true nature of the real Jesus.

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## Recognizing Satan’s Playbook of Deception

Nineteenth century America saw the beginnings of several alternative religions. Among them were Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Science, Watchtower Society (also known as the Jehovah Witnesses) and Unity. They, along with the Unification Church, which was started in 1954, all promulgate a version of Christianity that they allege is better than the original. While differences exist between them, there are some similarities in their tactics that deserve a closer look.

### The Great Apostasy

Except for Unity, all believed in the Great Apostasy of the early Christian church. Proponents of this theory claim that the gospel that was established by Jesus Christ was lost and that the early Church had fallen away from the original faith He founded. But since God said to the prophet Ezekiel in the Old Testament, “‘For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone,’ declares the Sovereign LORD. ‘Repent and live!’” (Ezekiel 18:32) it doesn’t seem reasonable that God would allow His Gospel to become “lost” at any time in history. This is because humankind without God’s gospel is spiritually dead and goes against His stated desire.

### The Bible is Unreliable

All the groups we’re examining claim that the Bible is unreliable. One slight exception is taken by the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists. They claim that one must take into account the writings of their founder, Ellen White, which they call the testimonies of the Spirit. (*Testimonies*, p. 661) The Jehovah Witnesses believe that the Bible is not inspired nor dependable. (*Kingdom Interlinear*, p. 7) Unity says, “...the Bible is one of many sacred books, all of which are to be treated with reverence as ‘records of men... communing with...God.’” (*Unity School of Christianity*, p. 13)

Nevertheless, the amazing thing about the Bible is how consistent it is from cover to cover despite being a compilation written in different times by different men and in different places. In addition, modern archeology continues to attest to the accuracy of the historical record that it relates.

### Additional Scriptures Necessary

So, if the one book that traditional Christianity relies as the basis of its beliefs can’t be considered reliable, what does one do so as an alternative? In the case of Mormonism, Christian Science and Jehovah’s Witnesses, they add to the list what they consider scripture. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) added not only the *Book of Mormon*, but also the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price*. The Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church, now known as the Community of Christ, also added their versions of the *Book of Mormon* and the *Doctrine and Covenants*. But they also replaced the traditional Bible with a new adaptation by Joseph Smith that they call The Inspired Version, which added and

if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. (Revelation 22:18-19)

### Deny the Deity of Christ

All the groups being examined in one way, or another deny the deity of Christ. One minor exception is the Community of Christ. While they may not deny the deity of Christ outright, they do minimize the significance of His role in someone receiving eternal life after they die. The Jehovah Witnesses believe that Christ was a god. Unity believes that Christ was the first exalted person. The LDS church believes that when good church elders die, they become the gods of their own planets—a type of pluralistic theology. Another church that believes in many gods is Unity because they believe that everyone is a god.

**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits....”**

1 John 4:1

deleted significant portions of the original. The Jehovah Witnesses also introduced their own edition of the Bible, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. Christian Scientists added *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as a book of scripture. The 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists, the Unification Church and Unity claim that for one to understand the Bible, one must include readings from writings by their founders.

In the New Testament Timothy was quite clear about the reliability of the Bible when he wrote, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16) When he uses the word, “all,” keep in mind that he is speaking about scripture that existed at the time he wrote his statement. One must also keep in mind the apostle John’s statement in Revelation, “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And

The Colossian church regarding the supremacy of Christ, “The Son [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” (Colossians 1:15) He continued in verse 18, “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”

On a side note, it’s interesting that despite denying the deity of Christ, several of these groups are quick to point out that they use Christ’s name in the formal name of their organization.

### Salvation Based on Works

The crucial stumbling block in humankind’s relationship to God is its disobedience to Him, or what He calls sin. But because Christ is part of the Triune Godhead, he has the power and the authority to forgive and hide our sins from a perfect, sinless God. It’s because of Christ’s payment on the cross of the punishment we deserve that it’s even possible for humans to someday come into the presence of God. But that isn’t good enough for any of the groups

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Furthermore, the *Book of Mormon* depicts a merciless and vengeful Jesus. In 3 Nephi 4:6-44, it tells of Jesus visit to the Americas after his crucifixion. It says that he caused catastrophic destruction and suffering, killing the unrighteous people and sparing only the righteous. By contrast, the Jesus of the Bible died for the unrighteous. He loved sinners and came to seek and save them, not wanting any of them to perish.

The true nature of Jesus is also concealed in Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version of the Bible. In a reputable version of the Bible John 1:1 reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word [Jesus] was God.” In the Inspired Version John 1:1 reads, “In the beginning

was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word.” This scripture twists Joseph Smith’s gospel, replacing Jesus as the Word of God.

The Jesus of the *Doctrine and Covenants* taught Joseph Smith’s followers to “curse their enemies” (Sec. 100: 5b, c); assume Jesus exclusive role as high priest (Sec. 26, 42) and keep the commandments in order to be saved (Sec. 12:3b). Each of these requirements contradict Jesus’ teachings in the Bible.

In *Teachings of the Prophet* (page 370), Joseph Smith stated, “I have always declared...Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the father, and that the Holy Ghost was a...Spirit: and these three constitute...three Gods”

In his *Lectures of Faith* Joseph Smith

clearly taught a different Jesus. He stated, “Where is the saved being? We conclude as to the answer of this question...that it is Christ. All will agree in this that...he [Christ] is a saved being” (Sec. 7:9j, k). This heretical teaching totally rejects Jesus’ deity.

From the beginning, the followers of Joseph Smith have put their faith and trust in the words of fallible, mortal men instead of the Word of the infallible Almighty God. Good-hearted, sincere RLDS/CoC members have been deceived into believing their church is Christian, perhaps not realizing that the Jesus they follow is not the Biblical Jesus. They have been taught that the primary reason Jesus came to earth was to be an example of righteous living. However, the very heart of the Christian faith is Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross where He paid the penalty

for our sins. His resurrection from the dead demonstrated God’s full acceptance of his sacrifice. This essential Biblical doctrine—the preaching of the cross—has never been the central message of the RLDS/CoC Church and is only vaguely alluded to in their writings, Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Considering the stark differences between the Jesus of the RLDS/CoC and the Jesus of the Bible, it behooves those of us who have been set free from the deception of Mormonism to share with our families and loved ones the true Jesus. “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and... deceive even the elect if that were possible.” (Matt 24:24)

### ...“Playbook” continued from front

we’re examining. All in one form or another require works as part of their path to heaven. Unity requires what they call “right thinking.” Keeping the sabbath is a crucial part of 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist theology. The others require membership in their particular church and obeying the law. In every case there is no assurance after someone dies whether or not they will go to heaven. In their belief systems there is always a tinge of doubt about whether someone has done enough or been good enough to merit eternal life with God.

#### One True Church

As was mentioned above, one of the conditions by these groups for their believers’ salvation is membership in their particular church. This is supported by their claim that their church is the “one true church” and that all the others are pretenders. This concept gives these organizations a way to keep their members tied to their particular sect. Some go so far as to shun former members who have chosen

to leave the sect. Jehovah Witnesses are renown for shunning former members. There even have been cases of serious splits in households where one spouse or child has decided to leave the Watchtower Society to become a Christian.

The similarities in strategy among the groups we’ve examined are revealing. We would like to suggest that Satan has a playbook that he turns to time and time again when he wants to drive a wedge between the Christian church and its believers. While there are likely differences in the details, it’s the similarities that Christians and non-Christians need to use as warning signs so that they don’t fall for these or similar group’s heretical beliefs.

The apostle John writes in 1 John 4:1-3, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come

in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”

If one wants to be able to “test the spirits” one needs to spend time reading a recognized, authorized Bible. While some claim that the King James Version is the only acceptable version of the Bible, there are other translations written in today’s language that readers may receive a greater benefit from. We suggest versions such as The New International Version, The Message, the New Living Translation as well as the New King James Version. We suggest daily reading, even if it’s only for 15 minutes at a time. A study version of one’s favorite Bible can help readers by putting verses in context. If you’ve never read the Bible, we suggest that you start in the book of John. Follow that with a thorough reading of the New Testament. Doing this will put you, the reader, in the best position to be able to “test the spirits.”

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