

Back To Basics

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KIND OF MINDS NEEDED

Johnie Edwards

The mind is important in serving God. So, we take a look at the kind of minds we all need.

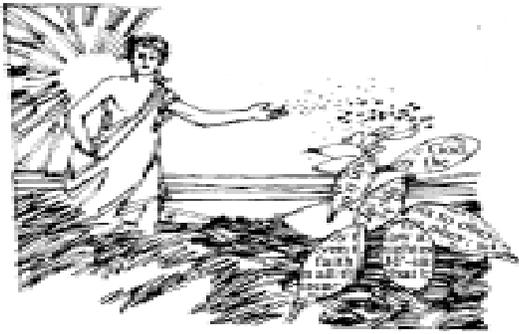
1) **WILLING MIND.** God is just not going to accept our work and worship until we learn to do it from a willing mind. When Solomon gave advice to his son, one of the things he stressed was to serve God “with a willing mind” (1 Chr. 28:9). God only accepted offerings for tabernacle building from those “that giveth it willingly with his heart” (Ex. 25:2). New Testament teaching also requires that in serving the Lord there must “first be a willing mind” (2 Cor. 8:12). If you have to have your arm twisted to get you to do the Lord’s bidding, you might as well forget it!

2) **WORKING MIND.** One reason many churches accomplish so little is there are not enough working minds. Work is the name of the game, when it comes to getting things done. Look at God’s Old Testament building people. They built the Jerusalem wall in 52 days despite all kinds of opposition “for the people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4:6). Like Jesus, we must “work while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work” (Jn. 9:4). Let Paul stir and stimulate us to be “always, abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

3) **READY MIND.** God’s people must be a ready people. We must “be ready to hear” (Eccl. 5:1); “ready to give answer” (1 Pet. 3:15); and, as the Bereans, “receive the word with all readiness of mind” (Acts 17:11). The Corinthians were praised for their “ready mind” (2 Cor. 8:19), when it came to their giving. Do you have a ready mind?

4) **SOUND MIND.** There is a great demand for sound minds among us. Paul reminded Timothy, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). Perhaps one reason soundness is lacking among us is because we are short on sound minds!

5) **SAME MIND.** Because brethren dwelling “together in unity” is a pleasant affair (Ps. 133:1), the Bible teaches us, “be ye all of one mind” (1 Pet. 3:8). “That ye stand fast...with one mind” (Phil. 1:27). Paul also said, “Be ye likeminded, let us mind the same thing” (Phil. 2:2; 3:16). Paul wrote the Corinthians, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).



THE SOWER'S SEED

Basic Sermon Starters

"HE THAT GOETH FORTH AND WEEPETH, BEARING PRECIOUS SEED, SHALL
DOUBTLESS COME AGAIN WITH REJOICING, BRINGING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM."

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF BOUNTIFUL GIVING

Introduction

1. The Scriptures appeal to us to be bountiful givers (Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).
2. Bountiful giving is marked by abundance. It involves free and generous giving.
3. Let's notice some examples.

Discussion

I. ISRAEL'S GIVING FOR THE TABERNACLE

- A. Exodus 25:1-2
- B. Exodus 35:4-5, 20-22
- C. The people brought "much more than enough" (Ex. 36:1-7).

II. ISRAEL'S GIVING AT TEMPLE DEDICATION

- A. 1 Kings 8:1-5, 62-66
- B. They sacrificed "sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude" (1 Ki. 8:1-5). The brazen altar "was too little to receive the burnt offerings" (1 Ki. 8:62-66).

III. ISRAEL'S GIVING FOR HOUSE REPAIRS

- A. 2 Chronicles 24:4-14

- B. The Lord's house had been broken up and needed fixing up (2 Chr. 24:7).

- C. They made a chest, set it without the gate, and gathered money in abundance (2 Chr. 24:8-11).

IV. MACEDONIANS' GIVING FOR NEEDY SAINTS

- A. 2 Corinthians 8:1-8
- B. They were in a state of poverty, but gave liberally (2 Cor. 8:2).
- C. They went beyond their power to help (2 Cor. 8:3).

V. GOD'S GIVING

- A. James 1:17
- B. Some things God has given:
 1. His grace (Ti. 2:11).
 2. A book (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 3. Life (1 Jn. 5:11).
 4. His Son (Jn. 3:16).
- C. No man can outgive God! (Lk. 6:38).

Conclusion

These Biblical examples of bountiful giving should stir us to evaluate our giving.

Back To Basics

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A TALEBEARER VERSUS A FAITHFUL SPIRIT

John Isaac Edwards

Divine wisdom literature teaches, “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter” (Prov. 11:13). These words need to sink deep down into our ears.

1) A TALEBEARER REVEALETH SECRETS.

A talebearer is one who spreads gossip or rumors. Some seem to think it is their place to be an informer of the brethren, and make it their practice to reveal personal or sensational facts about others (whether true or imagined). We need to know what the word of the Lord says about such.

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people...” (Lev. 19:16).

“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly” (Prov. 18:8).

“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth” (Prov. 26:20).

Talebearers (gossips, revealers of secrets) are in violation of a spiritual shalt not, inflict deep, penetrating wounds, kindle strife, and ought not to be meddled with (Prov. 20:19). The best way to end strife caused by a talebearer is to cast out the talebearer!

2) HE THAT IS OF A FAITHFUL SPIRIT

CONCEALETH THE MATTER. There are some matters that do not need to be disclosed. There is “a time to speak” and “a time to keep silence” (Eccl. 3:7), and may God give us the wisdom to know the difference! Every Christian needs to be of a faithful spirit, but it is especially critical for elders and preachers and their wives to be so. Matters

discussed in an elders’ meeting, for example, are matters of confidence. When an elder says that he does not intend to keep it that way and betrays the trust of brethren, he has committed a grave offense and ought to be removed from the office. The same goes for preachers. Brethren sometimes bring personal, private matters before the preacher and he must be of a faithful spirit. Brethren have been disturbed and divided unnecessarily by talebearing. Some are quick to pick up the phone or send an e-mail about things they have no business talking about. Some folks just need to learn to be quiet and mind their own business (1 Th. 4:11). “Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin...” (Eccl. 5:6).

Kind Of Minds Needed

Johnie Edwards..... 1

The Sower’s Seed

Biblical Examples Of Bountiful Giving..... 2

A Talebearer Versus A Faithful Spirit

John Isaac Edwards..... 3

Another Milestone

Melba Edwards..... 4

Why We Believe

Joe Corley..... 5

“Faith Only” Texts In Context #2

Franklin T. Puckett..... 6

Biblical Applications Of Infinity

Carl Peterson..... 8

Practical Lessons From Genesis #2

Donnie V. Rader..... 9

Another Testament Of Jesus Christ?

Matt Foster..... 10

Teaching Tips

Debbie Edwards..... 12

Unity Of The Spirit Or Unity In Diversity?

Jason T. Leber..... 13

Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards..... 14

For Of Such Is The Kingdom Of God

David Eldridge..... 15

ANOTHER MILESTONE

Melba Edwards

Several members of the congregation of which I am a member have reached another milestone this year, including yours truly. Entering a new decade, and as another year passes, I'm reminded of some responsibilities Paul wrote concerning older women in Titus 2:3-5.

1) **OLDER WOMEN ARE TO BE REVERENT IN BEHAVIOR.** The King James Version uses the word “holiness.” Being reverent in behavior means having a proper conduct. It is having the proper conduct toward God, others, and to self. Her characteristics include being devout, submissive, worshipful, faithful, God-fearing, pure, spiritual, righteous, and virtuous. She also has a sacred character. She is set apart for spiritual service (2 Cor. 6:17). This is something that takes much time in developing, but we can be reverent in our behavior.

2) **OLDER WOMEN ARE NOT TO BE SLANDERERS OR FALSE ACCUSERS.** *Slander* may be defined as finding fault with the demeanor and conduct of others. It is spreading innuendos and criticisms in the church. It is a false spoken statement and it damages another's reputation. It is untrue, malicious, and vicious. The Scriptures show that slander is heard (Ps. 31:13), the wicked slander (Ps. 50:16-20), whoever spreads slander is a fool (Prov. 10:18), and slanderers will also be destroyed (Ps. 101:5). Paul said, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Col. 4:6). Let us not be guilty of slander.

3) **OLDER WOMEN ARE NOT TO BE GIVEN TO MUCH WINE.** *Given* here means “enslaved.” The word “much” does not mean she can have a little. Much is an indefinite adjective. It may be used as an exaggeration to stress a point. We can look at a tree that has lost all of its leaves and say, “There is not much leaves on that tree,” meaning there are not any. Other passages show the effects of drinking and its consequences (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35). It is also listed as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). 1 Peter 4:3 does away with the idea that one can drink a little when he used the word “banquetings,” meaning drinking parties. How can older women be reverent in behavior or set the proper example if they are given to much wine?

4) **OLDER WOMEN ARE TO BE TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS.** A teacher is one who instructs and causes to know and understand. She is to be a teacher of good things. Paul goes on to say older women are to teach or admonish the younger women “to be sober, love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” I'm amazed at how little of this is being done. As we grow older our responsibilities grow too. Let's not neglect this much needed command!

Growing older can be a good thing. Our attitude has much to do with it. Let us age gracefully and do the things God expects of us.

WHY WE BELIEVE

by
Joe Corley

The Bible is here. It demands an explanation. For every EFFECT there must be an adequate CAUSE. Is it of human or divine origin? It claims to be the product of divine inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Its writers claim to have been guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 1 Cor. 2:12-13). Does the evidence support the claim? We believe it does. Following, in a nutshell, are a few of the many reasons why we believe it is true.

1) **UNITY AND CONSISTENCY.** It contains 66 books written over a period of about 1600 years. Many Bible books were written in different places, under different circumstances by men who came from different backgrounds. Yet, it is consistent throughout in its presentation of God, of man, of sin and of morality. It has no contradictions. The alleged contradictions of its critics are easily explained. It has one central theme: The Redemption Of Man through one principle character – Jesus Christ. Its grand climax is reached in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. It begins with man’s creation and fall into sin; then ends with his victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ. Men would have been incapable of such consistency, therefore, God must be behind its writing.

2) **RELEVANCE.** All man’s spiritual needs have been supplied in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17), just as man’s physical needs are supplied in nature. Man still needs the Bible because it reveals the only remedy for sin. If man is disposed to seek for it in the pages of this grand book, he will find it (Mt. 7:7-8).

3) **FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.** There are hundreds of prophecies in the Bible that were fulfilled in minute detail, even hundreds of years after they were written. For example, there are many prophecies concerning the destruction of once great nations such as Babylon (Is. 23), Egypt (Ezek. 29-31), Tyre (Ezek. 26), and many others. There are a great many prophecies concerning Christ (the Messiah) who would come, such as His birthplace (Micah 5:2-4), His life (Is. 53), and His crucifixion (Ps. 22), which were fulfilled by Jesus. Man cannot know the future; therefore, these things must have come from God.

4) **ACCURACY.** The Bible is accurate with reference to whatever it deals. Although it is not a book of science, nor is it written in scientific terminology, wherever it touches upon such matters it is always accurate, even at a time when learned men were ignorant of the facts. It speaks of the roundness of the earth (Is. 40:32), its suspension in space (Job 26:7), and the water cycle (Eccl. 1:7; Job 36:27-28) – long before man knew of these things. It has been shown by archaeologists to be accurate historically and geographically as well.

Space prohibits us to write of the Bible’s ethical purity, its great influence upon men and the entire world, and the fact of its indestructibility. In spite of powerful attempts through the centuries to destroy or render it ineffective, it has withstood these vicious attacks and today is the most widely distributed book in the world. Truly, it “lives and abides forever” (1 Pet. 1:23). These are but a few of a great many evidences to support our faith. Volumes have been written on this subject. No book on earth can compare with it. It is unique in style and purpose. Its contents challenge the wisest of men. Only God could give us such a book!

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"FAITH ONLY" TEXTS IN CONTEXT #2

Franklin T. Puckett, "Dead Yet Speaketh"

Advocates of the "faith only" theory of salvation rely much on the gospel of John to sustain them in their false doctrine. They read all the passages in this book on faith, and conclude that faith is the only thing that is either necessary or even important. For instance, Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:14-16). And again, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Jn. 3:18). The same chapter tells us, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (v. 36).

Denominational preachers gather these passages (and many others like them) together, and declare that salvation is

by faith only. All of them speak of salvation by faith – but none of salvation by faith only.

1) "HATH EVERLASTING LIFE." Men stress the fact that the Scripture says the "believer hath everlasting life" (Jn. 3:36). They declare that it is "hath" and not "will have"; but they fail to take into consideration that Biblical language speaks of things that are prospective as though they were present. Both present tense and past tense are often used to depict future things.

As an illustration of this truth, recall that Isaiah predicted the Galilean ministry of the Messiah in these words, "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Is. 9:1-2). Had the light already shined on them when Isaiah wrote? Why, that statement was made 700 years before Christ was born!

But what, we are asked, is the condition of the believer now? Does not the Bible say of him that he "hath eternal life"; "shall not come into judg-

ment"? Since one is a believer before he is baptized, then all of these statements describe his condition before he is baptized! Thus the advocates of the "faith only" doctrine would think to clinch their argument.

But the answer to that is: for every passage which presents the believer as "saved" we can present another passage which presents the believer as "unsaved." There must be some explanation. And there is. The solution is found in the *kind* of a believer. What kind of a believer is contemplated in the passages which speak of the believer as saved; and what kind of believer is contemplated in the passages which speak of the believer as unsaved? There lies the key to the whole matter.

2) **THE POWER TO BECOME SONS.** John records of Christ that, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Jn. 1:12). That passage is far from saying that the believers are already sons of God. It emphasizes the very opposite: they are *not* sons of

God, but may *become* sons of God. Believers are the only ones who can become sons of God; certainly unbelievers cannot. But God grants to the believer the privilege of putting his belief to work in obeying the gospel, and thus becoming a son of God. If he were already a son as soon as he believed, then Christ would not have spoken of the “power to become” a son. It is very evident that not every believer exercises the power God gives him; not every believer takes advantage of the privilege extended to him. For there are thousands of believers who are not children of God, and who are not heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

3) **“BELIEVED, AND TURNED UNTO THE LORD.”** “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus

and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:21). Were these people saved as soon as they believed? If so, they were saved before they ever turned to the Lord! The passage affirms two things of these people: (1) they believed, and (2) they turned to the Lord. And the turning to the Lord came after the believing. Turning to the Lord must always follow belief. No unbeliever will turn to the Lord; only the believer will so act.

4) **“BELIEVED...BUT DID NOT CONFESS.”** “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (Jn. 12:42-43). Now some advocates of “faith

only” try to evade the force of this passage by saying that the belief of these chief rulers was merely belief “about” Christ, but that they did not truly believe in Him, did not truly trust Him, did not truly rely on Him. Well, the record says they did believe “on” Christ. They did not merely believe something “about” Him – they believed *on* Him. But they would not confess Him. Words cannot be any plainer than those used by Jesus, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt. 10:32-33). Those chief rulers simply did not have the courage to make their confession of faith in Christ; they were too cowardly; they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

These cowardly rulers clearly came under the condemnation of Christ, believers though they were. Their faith could not save them. Faith alone is not enough. The only faith that will save is the faith that *obeys*.



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BIBLICAL APPLICATIONS OF INFINITY

Carl Peterson

Infinity is a mathematical concept describing a number outside the range of any expressible number. Infinity can be positive (greater than any possible number) or negative (less than any possible number). No matter how much one adds to or subtracts from infinity (even infinity), the result is always infinity. Infinity can be seen in a number of Biblical applications, three of which will be examined here in addition to a case where infinity does not apply.

1) **THE WISDOM OF GOD.** God, through the prophet Isaiah, said, in Isaiah 55:9, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” While modern science has given us the distance from earth to the various heavenly bodies, the heavens themselves – the empty part of the sky – is infinitely far away. We could never get to them. In that time, even the Moon was, for all intents and purposes, an infinite distance away. The point that can be made from the verse is that God’s ways and thoughts are so far above man’s that no matter how much knowledge mankind accumulated, it could never begin to equal that of God. This was the lesson of Babel in Genesis 11.

2) **THE JOY OF HEAVEN AND SORROW OF HELL.** We see in Revelation 21 that in Heaven there will be no more sorrow, crying, or pain, while Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:30 that Hell will be a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth; verse 46 calls it everlasting punishment. We can use the concept of infinity to appreciate this. Using a checking account where debits represent sorrow and credits represent joy, those who are given Heaven as an eternal home will be credited

infinite joy. No matter how many debits were accumulated in life (sorrows), there is no way those debits can balance out the joy of Heaven, hence why there will be no sorrow in Heaven. Those who will receive everlasting punishment will be debited with infinite sorrow. Even if a person were to have all the joy in the world, it would not make the punishment awaiting them a pleasant thing. Indeed, the words of Jesus in Mark 8:36 ring true: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

3) **GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE.** Paul speaks of the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians 3:11. God has had a plan from the beginning of the world. No matter how far back in time you go, whether it be the day of Pentecost, the time of David, or even the beginning of the universe, God’s plan has always been in existence and in effect. That is what is meant by an “eternal” purpose. This is unlike the premillennial view that God had to come up with a new plan (the church) when the Jews rejected Jesus’ attempt to establish the kingdom. God’s plan has never changed.

4) **NOT APPLICABLE: FORGIVENESS OF SINS.** Most denominations would have you believe that infinity may applied to remission of sins. Not so. If we use the checkbook analogy, God does not credit us for infinite sins committed. He only reconciles those committed of which we have repented. He brings the balance back to zero, not positive infinity.

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PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM GENESIS #2

Donnie V. Rader

In our first article, we looked at some practical lessons that we can glean from a study of Genesis. In this article, we go back to the first of the book to begin our practical conclusions.

1) **MAN IS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD (GEN. 1:27).** To be in the “image of God” has generally been interpreted by Theologians to refer to the spirituality of his being, his moral integrity and his dominion over the creatures (*Pulpit Commentary, Vol. I, p. 30*). Thus, man is not merely a higher animal. No animal is made in the image of God. But, man is. Thus, our lives should reflect God and His word.

2) **MAN HAS DOMINION OVER THE ANIMAL KINGDOM (GEN. 1:26; 9:2-4).** We hear a lot about “animal rights.” We are even told by some that it is cruel to kill animals for food. However, God placed man in dominion over the animal kingdom and further said, “every moving thing that lives shall be food for you” (Gen. 9:3).

3) **IT IS NOT GOOD TO BE ALONE (GEN. 2:18).** When God created man he saw that he was lonely and said, “It is not good that man should be alone.” Thus, God made woman as a companion suitable for him. The women’s liberation movement tells women they are better off if they never marry. Marriage is pictured as bondage. Some men talk (though sometimes as a joke) about how much better they would be if they were single. God said, it is not good. Thus, marriage is good and good for us.

4) **TEMPTATION DOES NOT REVEAL ALL THAT SIN DOES TO US (GEN. 3:1-6).** When Eve was tempted, all she was told was about how she would be as God knowing good and evil. She was

not told about separation from God, the pain in childbirth, banishment from the garden, or death and disease. All of that she learned the hard way. Don’t forget when you are tempted that the Devil is not telling you everything.

5) **THE PROBLEM WITH SIN IS NOT IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT GOD SAYS (GEN. 3:3).** Eve well understood God’s prohibition in Genesis 2:17, for she explained it to Satan (Gen. 3:3). Thus, when people do wrong today, it is not because they can’t understand what God requires.

6) **“NAKED” IS A TERM USED NOT ONLY TO DESCRIBE THE COMPLETELY NUDE BODY, BUT ALSO THE PARTIALLY CLOTHED BODY (GEN. 3:7, 10).** Even though they had the fig leaves, God saw fit to put clothes on them (v. 21). Thus, those who are not dressed modestly, are “naked.”

7) **THE “BLAME GAME” IS A COMMON EXCUSE FOR SIN (GEN. 3:12-14).** Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. Today, we claim we would have done different had it not been for...

8) **THE PRINCIPLE OF DRESSING PROPERLY AND MODESTLY APPLIES TO MEN AS WELL AS WOMEN (GEN. 3:21).** When God made tunics of skin, he made one for Adam as well as for Eve.

9) **NOT ALL WORSHIP IS ACCEPTABLE (GEN. 4).** Cain and Abel both worshiped God. Only one of them was acceptable. Just because we are religious or even Christians who assemble all the time, doesn’t mean that our worship is acceptable.

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ANOTHER TESTAMENT OF JESUS CHRIST?

Matt Foster

This article I write to my friends who are in the Mormon religion. We do not have any Mormons in Piggott, Arkansas that I am aware of, but I have known several in my life. I hope they will read this with the understanding that it is written in love and concern for their soul. Those whom I have known that are Mormons are good people, whose souls need saving.

On the front of my book of Mormon, it says, "Another testament of Jesus Christ." You also hear them make this statement in their commercials. However, based upon the evidence found in the Bible and in the book of Mormon, I find this statement to be fraudulent.

If the book of Mormon is of divine origin, as they claim, and the Bible is also a book of divine origin, then they should harmonize in all things as both would be the truth. We are told in John 17:17 that His word is truth. But, if we find they contradict one another, at least one of them must be false.

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THEY DO CONTRADICT ONE ANOTHER.

1) The book of Mormon says Jesus was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10). The Bible says he was born in Bethlehem of Judaea (Mt. 2:1).

2) The book of Mormon says there were three days of darkness at Jesus' death (1 Nephi 19:10). The Bible says there were three hours of darkness (Mt. 27:45; Lk. 23:44).

3) The book of Mormon states the name of the Redeemer was to be Christ (2 Nephi 25:19). The Bible tells us Jesus was the Christ (Mt. 16:16). This was not His name. The unbelieving Jews never referred to Him as Jesus Christ because they rejected Jesus as the Christ.

4) I believe they claim the book of Alma was written about 73 B.C. which makes refer-

ence to Christians (Alma 46:13-14; 48:10). Yet, the Bible plainly tells us they were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26).

5) The book of Mosiah (147 B.C.) says they were called the Church of Christ from that time forward (Mosiah 18:17). But, according to the Bible, Christ had not yet built His church.

We could go on, but space will not allow it. From this small sample, it is clear that the Bible and the book of Mormon do not harmonize. Instead, they contradict one another. Both cannot be from God. Which will we believe? Mormons claim the book of Mormon is correct and that the Bible has been perverted or mistranslated. According to 1 Nephi 13:40 the "abominable church" perverted the Bible by taking out some "plain and precious things." I would like for someone to please tell me just what "plain and precious things" have been taken away from the Bible and restored by Joseph Smith's book of Mormon.

THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS SUPPOSEDLY GIVEN TO JOSEPH SMITH TO TRANSLATE BY DIVINE INTERVENTION; YET, THE THINGS HE CLAIMED TO TRANSLATE DO NOT CLAIM TO BE OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE, BUT BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF MAN. Notice in 1 Nephi 1:2-3 where the writer says, "I make it according to my knowledge." In 1 Nephi 19:6 he says, "I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be sacred." It claims to have imperfections (Mormon 9:31-33).

In my book of Mormon, there is a page entitled an explanation about the book of Mormon, which states some minor errors were in the past editions of the book of Mormon. They claim these have been corrected and brought into conformity with the "prophet" Joseph Smith's original manuscripts. Who is to say this version

is more accurate? In fact, the changes in the book of Mormon have been to correct and cover up some of the errors of Joseph Smith, the so called "Prophet." Unlike the book of Mormon, the Bible never needs to correct the words of the inspired men who wrote it.

THE BIBLE CLAIMS THAT IT IS GOD BREATHED OR INSPIRED (2 TIM. 3:16). Given by inspiration and not by the will of man (2 Pet. 1:20-21), it claims to be perfect or complete (2 Tim. 3:16). Which will we believe? A book of contradictions and one that by its own admission is of man, or will we believe the one that is God breathed? I want the one that is solely from God. So, let God be true and every man a liar (Rom. 3:4).

BY THE TIME SMITH'S PROPHECIES CAME, PROPHECYING HAD CEASED, AS WE ALREADY HAD THE PERFECT OR COMPLETE REVELATION OF THE WILL OF GOD (1 COR. 13:8-10). The Holy Spirit was sent to the apostles to guide them into *all truth* (Jn. 16:13). All truth indicated nothing about Mormonism. The truth was confirmed by the miracles they performed (Heb. 2:3-4). What miracles did Joseph Smith perform to confirm his word? The word was then written down for all ages (Eph. 3:3-5). Yet, they claim it was taken away. But Jesus said it would not be taken away (Mt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). Many a man has tried to destroy God's word, but all have failed. We have a perfect or complete revelation (2 Tim. 3:17) which was once delivered for all ages (Jude 3). There was no need for the latter day revelations of Joseph Smith. All such revelations ceased with the completion of the New Testament. The book of Mormon is not of divine origin, but is a fraud.

THEREFORE, JOSEPH SMITH WAS NOT WHO OR WHAT HE CLAIMED TO BE. He was not what the "Latter Day Saints" make him out to be – "a prophet." Notice what the Scriptures claim about a prophet in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. If he told of future events and they did not come to pass, then he was not a prophet as claimed. In *Doctrines and Covenants* (84:15), he predicted the New Jerusalem and its temple would be built and erected dur-

ing the current generation. It never happened. In 1835, in the *History of the Church*, Smith predicted "the coming of the Lord was nigh...even fifty six years should wind up the scene." That time has long since passed, like many other such predictions of men, which proves they are not prophets. In *Doctrines and Covenants*, it was predicted the Civil War would include all nations and Great Britain. But, it was only a war between the states and not a world war. Still others could be listed, but space does not allow. Joseph Smith may have been many things, but a prophet he was not.

NOTICE THE CIRCULAR REASONING IN THE BOOK OF MORMON. The book of Mormon closes asking the reader to pray to God and have God reveal to him that the book is true. First, they want you to assume it to be true and pray to God that he will assure you it is true. If you are willing to pray, you already may feel it is right and so they hope when you pray you will feel that it is true. Such is subject to feelings that cannot be trusted (Acts 26:9). The Bible never seeks to show or prove itself to be authentic by such means. The Bible stands upon its own merits. It has been confirmed by miracles and we can still put it to the test today. It is full of prophecies which foretold future events and not one of them ever failed. The same cannot be said for the book of Mormon.

BY THEIR OWN ADMISSION, THE BOOK OF MORMON IS ANOTHER TESTAMENT OF JESUS CHRIST. Notice what Paul warns about in Galatians 1:6-9. Paul clearly tells us that even if an angel did appear to Joseph Smith, as he claimed, the testimony he received should have been rejected.

Friends, I appeal to you to cast aside the book of Mormon and accept the Bible alone as your guide. Come out of the Mormon religion that was started by a man (Joseph Smith) and be a Christian, a member of the church of Christ which Jesus built (Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11), the body of the saved (Eph. 5:23).

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TEACHING TIPS

Debbie Edwards

Bible class teachers help transform the lives of our young people. The future of the church depends on the knowledge imparted to our children. We should take great honor in obeying the command of Matthew 28:19 which says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” by teaching where the ground is most fertile: in the Bible classes of our own congregations. Deuteronomy 6:7 talks to us of teaching our children: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” The future of the church is in our hands. Below is an acrostic with a few “Teaching Tips” to guide us as Bible teachers.

Take time to study your lesson thoroughly. Tell the story; don’t just read it.

Encourage attendance by having an attendance chart up in the room and review it often with students.

Action. Act out the story using a flannel board or by letting the students act out skits; act out songs using motions. Increasing kinesthetic activities helps meet the learning preferences of *all* students. Some children learn best with auditory or visual learning, others do not.

Consistency. Be consistent with classroom behavior expectations, learning expectations, etc.

Honor their comments and input. If some of their comments are misguided or off-topic, help correct their thinking and guide them back to the topic. They often have valuable input, if we will but take the time to listen.

Inviting. Make the classroom an inviting place to be. Have colorful bulletin boards/posters that help connect with the topics they’re learning. Make the classroom more personable with pictures of the students around the room.

Neat and organized. Know where resources and supplies are. Keep your lessons neatly organized in binders/file cabinets.

Go over expectations the first day of class and revisit them often.

Teach by example. Students often imitate things they hear/see their teachers doing.

Individualize your lessons wherever possible so that each student can be successful at their level. Some questions/memory work, etc. need to be challenging and some less challenging to meet all students’ needs.

Pray often that God will help you be the best teacher you can possibly be. You may be well trained and have the best materials, but if you don’t pray about it, you won’t be able to teach as you should.

Souvenirs. Send home little souvenirs whenever possible to help students remember/retell the lesson. For example, when studying about Rahab, send home a little piece of red yarn/cord, or when studying about the Parable of the Sower, send home a few little seeds in a plastic bag.

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UNITY OF THE SPIRIT OR UNITY IN DIVERSITY?

Jason T. Leber

In the wake of a devastating movement, ironically called “unity in diversity,” the “unity of the Spirit” in the one true church is hanging in the balance (Eph. 4:3- 6). Some brethren have decided to open their arms of fellowship to the denominational world and erring brethren on issues of doctrine, that if not rectified will bring swift destruction to themselves and those who willfully follow them (2 Pet. 2:1). Although some may think a battle cry to be presumptuous and unnecessary, the word of God states otherwise (Is. 56:10-11). We are not to become lazy dogs unable to bark at departures from the faith, but we must contend for the faith earnestly that was given once for all (Jude 3).

When a Christian soldier will not gird his loins about with truth, he leaves himself open to attack. When joining ranks with such a soldier, or perhaps traitor, one must proceed with caution because the Scripturally blind leading the blind fall into a ditch (Mt. 15:12-14). However, this ditch is not only a few feet deep, but it is one that leads to everlasting punishment. In the Bible, we can read that all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8). If one does not speak in truth they are a liar. To speak in truth, we must use the word of God (1 Pet. 4:11). However, some cut the Scriptures in a crooked fashion to form a perverse puzzle that fits their frame of mind, not God’s. Paul wrote Timothy, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). To rightly divide means to cut straight and in a way that fits to God’s complete revelation – not just a portion of it.

Jesus states, “You shall know the truth and

the truth shall set you free” (Jn. 8:32). The truth sets us free from all corruption and ultimately from eternal damnation. To keep the “unity of the Spirit,” we must walk in truth. Walking in truth will set you apart from those who do not walk in the truth, or at least it should! Can one have fellowship with a person, but not their unscriptural doctrine? We are told to beware of those who do not walk in truth because God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the host of angels, and all those who remain faithful to the end will not have eternal fellowship with those who walk in lawlessness (Mt. 7:15-23)! If “unity in diversity” will not be tolerated on the day of judgment, it must not be tolerated by faithful men before that great day (2 Jn. 9-11).

To keep “unity of the Spirit,” there is no room for “unity in diversity.” Many brethren are compromising on issues such as marriage and divorce, drinking, musical instruments in worship, the necessity of baptism for salvation, and many other basic Bible doctrines. What we need is truth, not emotionalism, courage to contend, not compromise, and faithful men, not cowards. Jesus brought a sword with Him when He came to this earth (Heb. 4:12) and sometimes as Christians we have to unsheathe our swords to keep peace (Mt. 10:34). We must ask ourselves when we talk about peace and love in the church, are we leaving out the most important figure we must keep peace with? God! To be at peace with God and maintain “unity of the Spirit” we must walk according to His word (Phil. 4:9).

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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

The Judges

"Nevertheless the Lord raised up _____, which _____ them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges 2:16).

Read the Scripture and fill in the name of the judge.

1. Judges 3:9 _____
2. Judges 3:15 _____
3. Judges 3:31 _____
4. Judges 4:4 _____
5. Judges 8:32 _____
6. Judges 9:1 _____
7. Judges 10:1 _____
8. Judges 10:3 _____
9. Judges 11:1 _____
10. Judges 12:8 _____
11. Judges 12:11 _____
12. Judges 12:13 _____
13. Judges 13:24 _____
14. 1 Samuel 4:15, 18 _____
15. 1 Samuel 7:15 _____

Israel's Cycle (Judges 2:11-19)

SIN
(Israel goes into idolatry)
SERVITUDE
(God let nations enslave Israel)
SUPPLICATION
(Israel cries unto the Lord)
SALVATION
(God raises a judge to deliver)



"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

David Eldridge

On October 3, 2006, my wife Susan and I were blessed with the birth of our first child, Eliza. As I have been observing our beautiful baby girl these past couple of weeks, thoughts of what Jesus said in Luke 18:15-16 have been on my mind. There it is recorded, “And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, ‘Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.’” Let us consider some ways that those in the kingdom of God are to be like infants. We are to be...



1) **THOSE THAT TRUST.** The trust of our daughter towards her mother and me is unending. While we carry her in our arms, there is no fear of falling in her eyes – we have never dropped her. When she is hungry, her cries lessen when her mother picks her up knowing she will soon be fed – she has never gone hungry. As we have never yet let her down, she has no reason to doubt and every reason to trust without reservation. Those in the kingdom of God possess a similar, unending trust in their heavenly Father. God has never let us down; hence we have no reason not to trust Him. Psalm 46:1-2 states, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear...” God knows our needs before we do and has promised to meet each one (Mt. 6:25-34). Furthermore, every good thing that we enjoy in this life has been supplied by God (Jas. 1:17). We should trust God for He has never failed us, and every one of His precious promises stand sure in His faithfulness (Heb. 6:18).

2) **THOSE THAT ARE INNOCENT.** It is a beautiful thing to view the innocence found in our daughter. Innocence is defined as “freedom from guile or cunning, simplicity” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). In innocence and purity, she is unacquainted with evil and free from any sinful behavior. The Lord’s people are to possess a similar innocence. Paul instructed Timothy that he should be “an example to the believers...in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Paul behaved himself “in simplicity and godly sincerity” (2 Cor. 1:12). As the people of God, we must be cautious to maintain innocence “lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3). In our innocence, let us be “harmless as doves” that, as those who are “pure in heart,” we “shall see God” (Mt. 10:16; 5:8).

3) **THOSE THAT ARE FULL OF POTENTIAL.** Seeing this new life is seeing a life full of potential. Prayerfully, Eliza will grow up to be one who glorifies God. As those in the kingdom of God, we are full of potential. We have the potential to “bear much fruit” for the Father (Jn. 15:8), to cause others to glorify our Father in Heaven (Mt. 5:16), and to “obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10). God sees His children as those who are full of potential.

Are you becoming as a little child in trust and innocence that you might please God and make your calling sure as you fulfill your potential in His service?

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