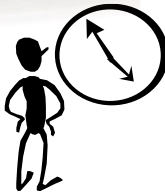


### Inside this issue:

<i>A Conversation with Mormon Elders</i>	1
<i>The Inspiration and Preservation of Scripture</i>	3
<i>What if it Became a Crime to Assemble?</i>	5
<i>A.M. Sermon Outline: Things All Married People Should Know</i>	6
Duty Rosters	7
Announcements & For the Record	8



### Time of Assembly



#### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.

#### Every other Sunday night:

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.  
Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## A Conversation with Mormon Elders

By Jimmy Ferguson

Many of us have received a knock on the door from young men claiming to be “elders” in the Mormon Church. While we admire their enthusiasm, it saddens us that these young men have been led into error. Some time ago I had an opportunity to sit down with these Mormon “elders.” Perhaps the following information will benefit our readers who may be approached by Mormons in the future.

The Mormon church was begun in about 1827 by Joseph Smith who supposedly received a visit from Jesus Christ who told him to start this church and to translate the Book of Mormon from golden plates which were buried in about 400 A.D. The Mormons believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are equally inspired. However, it was not surprising that our conversation revealed that they put more stock in the Book of Mormon than they do the Bible.

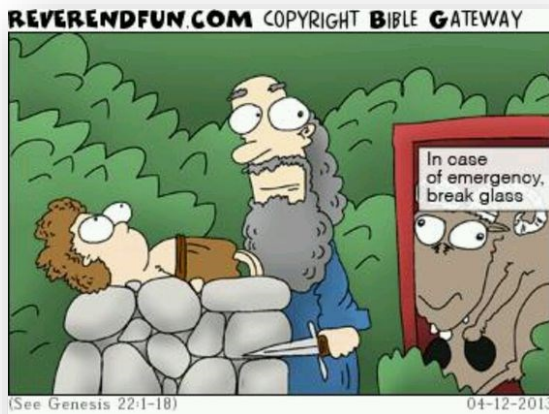
As our conversation began I asked these young “elders” if they believed that the Bible was inspired. They answered, “Yes.” I asked if they believed the Book of Mormon was inspired. Again, they answered, “Yes.” I then told them I had some problems with that and asked them to explain some things to me if they could. The following are a number of contradictions and inconsistencies which I set forth to them.

1. In [Micah 5:2](#) and [Matthew 2:1](#) the Bible says that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In the Book of Mormon (Alma 7:10), it says He was born in Jerusalem. I asked them which one was true. One told me that if I prayed to the Holy Spirit with a sincere heart, He would reveal to my mind that the Book of Mormon was true. I asked, “What if He reveals to me that the Bible is true?” (Of course, the

Holy Spirit does not reveal anything directly to our minds. The Bible is His revelation – [II Timothy 3:16,17](#)). No response was given to my question. I then reminded them that they had told me that they also believe the Bible is inspired.

2. In [Matthew 27:45](#) the Bible says that when Jesus was on the cross darkness covered the land for three hours. The Book of Mormon (Helaman 14:20) says that darkness covered the land for three days. Smith made the same mistake in 3 Nephi 8:3. No attempt was made to answer this contradiction.
3. The Bible says that the disciples were called “Christians” first in Antioch ([Acts 11:26](#)). The Book of Mormon has the Lord’s people called “Christians” before the birth of Christ (Alma 46:13,15,16 and 48:10). Again, no attempt was made to explain this.
4. [Genesis 11:9](#) says that God confounded the language of all the earth; the Book of Mormon (Ether 1:35) says He did not. One of the young men said that God did confound the language of everyone except one tribe. I reminded him that the Bible says otherwise.
5. The Book of Mormon (II Nephi 2:23) says that had Adam and Eve not transgressed “they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.” I pleaded, “Tell me how that in a state of innocence Adam and Eve would have no joy and do no good!” Again, no response.
6. There are even glaring contradictions in their own material. Another of their books, The Pearl of Great Price (Moses 6:54-55) says that children are born in sin. But the Book of Mormon (Moroni 8:12,22) teaches the opposite.
7. Mormons are baptized for their dead ancestors who may have been ignorant of baptism. However, the Book of Mormon (Alma 34:32-35) says that anything the dead might do in the spirit world or anything we might do here on their behalf will not change their condition.

I had listed several other contradictions but this is as far as we got. These young “elders” said that there was no need to talk any longer so they left. But the conclusion was irrefutable. If the Bible is true, then the Book of Mormon is false; and if the Book of Mormon is true, then the Bible is false. Furthermore, even the contradictions in their own books show that the Book of Mormon is **not** inspired and that Joseph Smith was a false prophet [teacher].



## The Inspiration and Preservation of Scripture

By George P. Estes

That Scripture is the word of God is accepted by all who believe in God and in Jesus. This includes the sixty-six books we call the Bible. In this age, some nineteen hundred years from the apostles of Christ, we need proof of what we have. And this proof must be convincing to assure us that what we have is God's word.

One proof is that all who wrote scripture were inspired by the Holy Spirit. "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*" ([II Timothy 3: 16](#)). This means the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. In [II Peter 2:21](#) is the reading, "*No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*" This includes all the prophets of the Old Testament. Moses was a prophet. He wrote, "*The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thy brethren, like unto me.*" ([Deuteronomy 18:15](#)). All of the other prophets spoke and wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. The writers of the New Testament were also inspired. The apostle Paul has "us" in his statement about inspiration, which would include all of the apostles and those associated with the apostles, such as Mark and Luke. The apostle wrote, "*But as it is written, eye has not seen, neither have entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all, yea, the deep things of God ... which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches*" ([I Corinthians 2:9-10,13](#)).

A second reason for accepting Scripture as God's word is its unity and harmony. Different men, in different times and places, wrote Scripture. It began with Moses and ended with the apostle John. The time is about sixteen hundred years. Yet when all of the sixty-six books and letters are brought together, we have one book. The reason for the agreement is the subject matter. Scripture is about man's sin and God's plan for his forgiveness in Jesus our Savior. The Old Testament is the unfolding of God's plan and the New Testament is the fulfillment of it. Each book and letter has its required place in the whole book. There is complete agreement in Scripture and it does not contradict itself. Man is not able to think of and set forth a plan of salvation like that in Scripture. Indeed, some people are offended at the gospel plan of salvation. The apostle Paul wrote about the Jews, "*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know God, it pleased God by the foolishness of proclaiming the gospel, to save those who believe. For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom*" ([I Corinthians 1:20-22](#))

The Scripture is proved to be God's word by how the subject matter is stated. All

of Scripture is in brief, concise statements. If the subject matter had been left to men, it would be in lengthy description and in many styles. But Scripture is written in the same way, whether we read in Genesis or in Matthew.

Evidence for the text of the New Testament is found in quotations in the writings of the Fathers. The Fathers, according to historians, are those men who knew the apostles or who quoted from them and copied verses from their writing. They were defenders of Christianity and of Scripture. The quotations are from these men of the first seven centuries. The ones noted here are those who knew the apostles.

- Clement of Rome died about 100 A.D. He wrote a letter to the Corinthian congregation. The date assigned to it is 95 AD. In it, he quotes often from the Old Testament as well as from the writings of the apostles.
- Ignatius of Antioch is another of these. He was taken to Rome and became a martyr under the emperor Trajan in 107 AD. On the way to Rome, he wrote seven letters to acquaintances and to congregations.
- And finally, Polycarp born in 59 A.D was acquainted with the apostle John. He wrote an epistle to the Philippians in which he quotes Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, I Peter, and ten of Paul's epistles, all of which he regarded as genuine. He died in 155 A.D.. [See H.S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, pp. 257-265].

For the preservation of the inspired writings and to separate them from writings that were being circulated, a canon was established. "Canon" is from the Greek language and means a rule, a standard, a measuring rod. The rules set forth were:

- Did an apostle write it or one associated with the apostles?
- Was the writing read and used by congregations and accepted by them?
- Was it recognized and accepted by those who followed the apostles (i.e. the Fathers)?
- Was the doctrine and content of the writing in agreement with the other inspired and accepted writings?
- And finally, is there the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the writing? Or was the writer inspired by the Holy Spirit?

The canon was given in 397 A.D. and the writings tested by it. Thus we have the canonical books and the uncanonical books or writings. This brought together the sixty-six books we have today and preserved them. [See H.S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, pp.140-141 and *Peloubet Bible Dictionary*, pg. 10V).



## What if it Became a Crime to Assemble?

By Terry Wane Benton

In China, it is reported that if you do not renounce your faith in Jesus you will be tortured till you do. If that is so, I wonder how many of us would renounce Christ? In parts of Nigeria, you will be killed for believing in Jesus. In some states here, there is external pressure to not assemble, and there is mounting pressure to limit the content of teaching so as not to "offend" certain very immoral people or expose the "*unfruitful works of darkness*" ([Ephesians 5:11](#)). Pressure is building to label these actions of love as "hate" instead of the love it takes to warn and appeal for people to repent so that they can be saved.

With all that has been happening, I hope that we are awake enough to see that the direction the world is moving and the fast rate of moral decline means that it might not be long until we are ordered not to assemble. They want us to think that it is for our good, but is it?

There are things that God commanded that must overrule the dictates of men. Peter said, "*We ought to obey God rather than men!*" ([Acts 5:29](#)). This was when the local governing leaders commanded them not to teach in Jesus' name anymore. It was upsetting many people, who would not hear and face the truth. Likewise, teaching the truth today is upsetting some people. Truth has a way of doing that.

But think about a church that never meets. What is happening to that church? They are breaking down their commitment to each other to "*build each other up in the most holy faith.*" Our passions of love for God and His people begin to smolder and die out. Put single coal in with other blazing coals and they keep each other going. But isolate each coal to themselves, and the fire goes out. The warmth of love dies, and the feeling of common brotherhood dies. We no longer "*speak to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" ([Ephesians 5:19](#)). We no longer share our common faith, hope, and love. We no longer confess Jesus to each other and keep His church edified in mutual togetherness. Our children now see the Lord's church as optional, and not necessary or all-important. We are actually not doing what the Lord wants us to do and designed local churches to do.

At this level, we have already consented to the devil's desire to have us. He sifts us as wheat and finds that we will easily give up confessing Jesus. All he lacks is a government mandate.

We must find ways to assemble and "*hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering*" and "*let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, nor forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some.*" ([Hebrews 10:23-25](#)). Don't let the passion and enthusiasm for Jesus die within. God's mandate is higher than human mandates and far more important. Let faith in Jesus raise you up into spiritual service. Don't settle on weak or empty faith!