

A Testimony of an Ex-Mormon

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Mormons like to give testimonies. Unlike Mormon testimonies, I will seek to show that the testimony of my conversion to Christianity is based upon the teaching of Scripture. There are many that claim to have had spiritual experiences. It is seen under close scrutiny that these experiences have actually affected how certain individuals interpret Scripture. Scriptures are often reinterpreted in light of the experience. This approach is fraught with dangerous pitfalls. II Corinthians 11:13-15 warns us of false workers who transform themselves into ministers of Christ. In Matthew 7:22,23 we find that there are those who have even worked miracles, but in the end Christ says, "I never knew you".

Even miracle workers may be enemies of Christ. We are to be on guard against false ministers and apostles. All organizations, whether secular or religious, offer testimonials. How are testimonials evaluated? Are there false testimonies? If Christ's Spirit is really working in someone's life, what will be the nature of the testimony? Many people do not grasp the potential for self-deception. Not only may we deceive ourselves, the apostle John tells us: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God..." I John 4:1. False spirits may deceive us.

The apostle tells us the nature of a true testimony in his gospel: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come...he shall not speak of himself.. He shall glorify me" John 16:13,14. A true testimony must glorify Jesus Christ. Glory given to another makes for an invalid testimony.

It is readily seen that Mormon testimonies concerning Joseph Smith (Mormon founder) do not qualify as being inspired by the Holy Spirit. Why? Mormon testimonies consistently exalt Joseph Smith or the supposed truthfulness of the Mormon Church. In I Corinthians 15:1-4 the apostle Paul tells us the nature or content of a true testimony: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." In this testimony I refer to several passages of Scripture that are relevant to Christ's resurrection, the work of the Holy Spirit in exalting Christ, man's condition, and

how men are saved. Do Mormons refer to these passages and the teachings contained therein when sharing their testimony? When Mormons give testimony to their faith in Christ, it is always supplemented by their larger testimony that Joseph Smith is a prophet and the Mormon Church is the only true church. The apex of Mormon testimonies goes beyond Christ to another, namely Joseph Smith.

My testimony can go no further than scripture. I confess by the grace of God the truth of what the apostle Paul teaches in I Corinthians 15:1-4. In another place he declares the following concerning man's condition: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" Romans 3:10,19. This was my condition. Paul goes on to say: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 6:23. I had earned the wages of death. God in his mercy gave me the gift of eternal life. The only thing that I earned and deserved was death. Eternal life came as a gift. One thing I am certain of and that is this: there was and is absolutely nothing in me that caused God to give me this gift. Jesus Christ gets all the glory and praise. I attempt to do as the writer of Hebrews sets forth: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" Hebrews 12:2. I look to Jesus by giving him the glory. God gave me the gift of faith. I am saved by grace and even my faith is a gift. Ephesians 2:8 says: "and that not of yourselves". What is not of yourselves? Faith! Did I choose Christ and exercise faith? Yes, but why? Who gets the glory? Christ? Or me? Why did I choose to believe? Ephesians 1: 4,5 supplies us the answer. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Was this salvation in my hands to choose or reject? If this were the case, then could I not glory in and of myself? How can that be so? Because I would have done something others had not done. The following verse tells us that the predestination is: "according to the good pleasure of his will." "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" Romans 9:16.

The doctrine of predestination more than any other teaching of scripture takes salvation out of man's hands and places it in God's control. Men do not like God's control. The cause of God's choosing or predestination is found in Him. If we insist that we played a part in God's choice, then human merit is brought into the picture. Salvation then becomes synergistic rather than monergistic. Biblical salvation is monergistic. Christ alone, by his complete and finished work saved me. Within a synergistic scheme, salvation becomes a cooperative effort. My work takes away from the work of Christ. How? I made a contribution. I played a part in my salvation. If I was not willing, then God could not save me. A synergistic scheme of salvation not only steals Christ's glory, it limits God's power. God can only do what I allow him to do within this type of system.

Again, I confess by the grace of God that: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" Titus 3:5.

This is the close of my testimony. "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen". Romans 16:27. heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28,29).

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