

Series: *Christianity vs. Mormonism*

Title: "Mormonism's Pagan Deity" (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 11/25/2012

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Today we continue our series of messages titled *Christianity vs. Mormonism*. We shall continue to see that the position is truly *Christianity versus Mormonism*, because Mormonism has no legitimate claim to be any part of authentic Biblical Christianity.

In these messages, we are asking and answering several essential questions about Mormonism. In our last message, we asked the question, "What does Mormonism teach about the Bible?" This is the first question that we must ask of every religion and every teacher. What do you believe about the Bible? Why must we begin with that question? We must begin there because God begins there. From the book of Deuteronomy all the way through to the end of Revelation, God commands that no one shall add to His Word, subtract from His Word, contradict His Word, or undermine His Word.

We saw that Mormonism violates every one of these commandments. Mormonism replaces the authentic Word of God given to us in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments with a set of evil fictions. Mormonism replaces the authentic Bible with its own amended version of the Bible, plus three other books that Mormons call "Scripture" but are not Holy Scripture. These additional books are the writings of men. They are not inspired by God.

Mormonism places its additional writings in authority over Holy Scripture, and twists many passages in the Bible in order to make them conform to Mormon

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theology – the commandments and doctrines of men. They add to God's Word, they take away from God's Word, they contradict God's Word, and thus they dare to undermine God's Word.

The Next Essential Question

Now that we understand Mormonism's debased attitude toward the Bible, today we are going to move on and begin to address a second essential question about Mormonism: What does Mormonism teach about God? More specifically, what does Mormonism teach about God the Father, about Jesus Christ, about the Holy Spirit, and about the Trinity? We are going to find that Mormonism teaches not the authentic God the Father of Scripture, not the authentic Jesus Christ of Scripture, not the authentic Holy Spirit of Scripture, but rather a collection of "gods" (gods with a small "g") that can only be accurately described as pagan monstrosities.

As we examine Mormon theology, we are going to see that Mormonism is essentially polytheistic. Mormonism teaches the existence of many gods, not the one true, and living, and triune God of Holy Scripture. Mormon theology is also essentially pagan. These teachings are the heart of the Mormon heresy. The gods of Mormonism are the successors of the gods of ancient Egypt, and the gods of the pagan nations that Jehovah drove out of the land of Canaan, and the gods of Babylon, and the gods of ancient Greece and Rome. The gods of Mormonism are Satanic counterfeits of the one true and living God of the Bible.

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How Can Evangelicals Be Inclusive Toward Such a Pagan Theology?

Now at this point you may be asking a very good question: If this is true, if Mormon theology is essentially polytheistic and pagan, how is it that growing numbers of people who claim to be Evangelical Christians, and even men who are prominent leaders of the nominally Evangelical church – how can such people, who claim to believe in the God of the Bible, deny that Mormonism is a cult? How can they dare to suppress that fact? How can they even entertain the idea that anyone who believes Mormon teaching is a Christian?

Well dear friends, as always we must turn to the authentic Word of God for the answer to such a question, and God does not fail to give us the answer. We find that the Apostle Paul faced the same problem in the early church at Corinth. The Corinthian church had a very good beginning. We read in the eighteenth chapter of Acts that Paul was with them, and he personally instructed them in the true faith, every day for a year and a half.

But the Corinthian church existed in a time when they were a small minority among an overwhelmingly pagan majority. And after Paul left, members of the Corinthian church began to adopt an attitude of tolerance toward the paganism around them. And so Paul wrote to them, to shake them out of this attitude of inclusiveness. He wrote to remind them that authentic Biblical Christianity is exclusive and not inclusive. He wrote to remind them that the way to eternal life,

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as Jesus said, is narrow and not broad. Here is how Paul put it – Second Corinthians chapter eleven, beginning at verse three. He said,

I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!
(2 Corinthians 11:3-4)

Dear friends, this is exactly what is happening in some parts of the Evangelical church today. Mormonism comes, preaching another Jesus, preaching another spirit, preaching a different gospel – and growing numbers of self-described Evangelicals are putting up with it, and even welcoming it. And when they do this, they are forsaking the clear teachings of the Word of God.

Today's Weak Doctrine of the Trinity

Now, you may be asking another question: How can this be? How could this happen? Here is the reason: In the last several generations, the Evangelical church has lost its grasp of the fullness of the Biblical doctrine of God, and especially the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

We find a weak doctrine of the Trinity in the church today – if the doctrine of the Trinity is taught at all. And we even find some men, some radio and television

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preachers who call themselves Evangelical, openly denying the doctrine of the Trinity.

Dear friends, under such conditions, it is no wonder that an essentially pagan religion like Mormonism can gain a hearing and a foothold in the nominally Evangelical church. When you don't have a firm grasp of the truth about the God of the Bible, you can easily put up with Mormonism. If you don't have a firm grasp of the fact that the one true and living God declares that He alone is God, one God revealed in three Persons, and that there is no other god, you can easily put up with Mormonism. If you don't have a firm grasp of the nature of truth, you can easily put up with Mormonism.

Truth and Error: A Great Divide, Not a Continuum

Dear friends, we live in an age when most people think of truth and error as a continuum. In our day, even most Christians think this way. They think that on one end of the spectrum is light, and on the other end of the spectrum is darkness, and in between there are varying shades of gray. And so, the thinking of growing numbers of self-described Evangelicals today goes something like this: Mormonism is one of those shades of gray. Mormonism has some of the truth, Mormonism has some of the light, and so we need to take an inclusive view of Mormonism. We aren't really that far apart theologically. And so, they say, we can work together with Mormons in moral and spiritual endeavors. That, dear friends, is a lie of the Devil.

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Listen, dear friends, to what God's Word says. First John chapter one, beginning at verse five:

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7)

And this, from Second John beginning at verse seven: "[M]any deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh." In other words, like Mormonism, they do not confess the true doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. And so John continues –

This [the person who does not confess the true Christ] is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. (2 John 7-11)

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The idea in the original language is this: "Do not offer even a single word of encouragement to such a person, because if you do so, you are sharing in his evil deeds just as if you did them yourself."

Dear friends, this is not the language of inclusiveness. This is not the language of theological tolerance within the church. This is not the language of a continuum between truth and error. This is not the language of our time, that says that you have your truth and I have my truth, and we all need to get along under one big ecumenical tent. No. Not at all. This is the language of a great divide. This is the language of light and darkness, truth and error, spiritual life and spiritual death – with a great gaping divide between the two, not shades of gray.

That, dear friends, is how we must approach anything that is not authentic Biblical Christianity. That is how we must approach anyone who would bring such doctrines into the church. And, that is how we must approach anyone who says that we must be tolerant of such things, that we must overlook differences, and work together in moral and spiritual causes with those who embrace such things.

Examining Mormon Theology: The Correct Approach

On the contrary, dear friends we need to expose the false gods of Mormonism. But I want to approach that task in the proper way. I mentioned a few moments ago that we have a weak doctrine of God in the Evangelical church today. And so, as we examine the false gods of Mormonism, I want to make sure that we first have a firm grasp of the authentic God of the Bible in our minds. You cannot identify the

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counterfeit – and you cannot understand why the counterfeit *is* a counterfeit – unless you have a firm grasp of the genuine article.

So, as we proceed, I want to first present what Scripture has to say about God. And once we have that standard of truth clearly in our minds, we can hold up Mormon theology against that standard, and we can see what pagan monstrosities the false gods of Mormonism really are.

And so we are going to first examine the Biblical doctrine of God the Father, and then compare it with Mormon teaching. And then, in future messages the Lord willing, we are going to do the same with the doctrine of God the Son, Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine of God the Holy Spirit. And then we will conclude this part of our study by examining the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity and comparing it with Mormon teaching, which denies the Trinity.

The Biblical Doctrine of God the Father

So let us begin today with the doctrine of God the Father. Now, the doctrine of God the Father is a large subject. It is far more than we can completely cover in a single broadcast. So what I intend to do today is to focus on three essential elements of the Biblical doctrine of God the Father that are completely denied by Mormonism.

But before I do that, let me also say that if you would like to undertake a more detailed study of the doctrine of God the Father in Scripture, we have teaching

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materials on our website that will help you. Our website address is teachingtheword.org, and you will find these far more extensive materials in our Bible Knowledgebase. These teaching materials will give you many more details about the doctrine of God, and the attributes of God the Father, and many more Scripture passages than we are able to present on this broadcast because of the limits of time. And if you download the transcript of this message, you will find additional Scripture references that I have not had time to mention on the air.

But let me give you three essential truths that we need to have in mind as we begin to compare the Biblical God the Father with the Mormon counterfeit.

First of all, Scripture speaks of Him as "the eternal God" in Deuteronomy 33:27 and elsewhere. A God of no beginning and of no ending, a God who has always been God, and will always be God (e.g., Psalm 90:2 and 102:12; 1 Kings 8:27).

Secondly, Scripture tells us repeatedly that God is not and never was a man. God did not begin in another state of existence and become God. He always has been precisely who He is (e.g., Genesis 19:31, Numbers 23:19, 1 Samuel 15:29, Job 9:32).

Thirdly, Scripture tells us that God is and has always been a perfect and self-contained unity. Absolutely holy, absolutely complete, absolutely self-sufficient, absolutely omniscient, and absolutely sovereign. God possesses all knowledge from eternity. God never learns anything. God is not bound by, or controlled by, time or events. God has never changed and will never change in any sense. God does not grow in any sense. God did not have to achieve His present status by

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some process of trial and learning. (E.g., Psalm 102:25-27, 139:4, and 147:4-5; Isaiah 6:3, 40:13-14, and 40:28; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; Hebrews 4:13; James 1:17; I John 1:5; Revelation 2:23 and 4:8.)

What Does Mormonism Teach About God the Father?

Now this is a very brief and very partial picture of some of the essential elements of the Biblical doctrine of God the Father. And in our next message, the Lord willing, as we move on to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, we are going to take up some additional elements of Mormon false teaching about God the Father. In Mormon theology, false teaching about God the Son and false teaching about God the Father go hand-in-hand. But with even this partial picture in mind, we now have a standard of comparison. We can now ask the question, "Is the person that Mormonism calls "God the Father" really the God of the Bible?"

For the answer, let me quote passages from Mormon writers that reveal to us the utterly pagan nature of Mormon theology about God the Father. In these Mormon teachings, we find denial of the doctrine that God is eternal. We find denial of the doctrine that God is not and never has been a man. And, we find denial of the eternal perfection of God, the eternal holiness of God, the eternal completeness of God, the eternal self-sufficiency of God, and the eternal omniscience of God. Mormon theology audaciously contradicts all of these essential attributes of God the Father.

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First of all, let me call your attention to a passage from the Mormon book called *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Joseph Smith gives this twisted version of the role of the being he calls "God the Father" in the Genesis creation account. Listen to what Joseph Smith says – and I am quoting him now: "In the Beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people in it." Notice that Joseph Smith depicts God the Father as "the head of the Gods" – like Zeus among the Greek gods or Jupiter among the Roman gods. Clearly, this is a pagan misrepresentation of God the Father.

Later in the same book, Joseph Smith states – and I quote him again – that "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man..." Another Mormon prophet named Lorenzo Snow echoed this when he said – and I quote – "As Man is, God once was: as God is, man may become." Mormon "Apostle" Orson Hyde says this – and I quote again – "Remember that God, our Heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, and the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is."

A Mormon book ironically called *The Gospel Through the Ages* states that "God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of Earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God – an exalted being – through obedience to the same eternal Gospel truths that we are given opportunity today to obey."

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A Pagan Monstrosity

Dear friends, Mormon teaching about the being which it erroneously calls "God the Father" is the same kind of teaching that is found in pagan religions from the oldest antiquity onward. Pagan religions frequently invent "gods" who were once men, and who arrived at a so-called state of deity by passing through some process of learning and testing that led eventually to god status.

The pharaohs of Egypt were treated as gods in this way. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon demanded worship as a god. The pagan gods of Greece and Rome were often depicted as having once been men and women. The Roman emperors declared themselves to be gods and demanded worship.

Dear friends, it is this same kind of pagan god, this same kind of pagan pantheon, which Mormonism sets forth in place of the one true and living God. Ancient paganism is alive and active in present-day Mormonism. When a Mormon candidate for political office says, "God bless America," he is not speaking of the God of the Bible-believing Christian. When a well-known Mormon radio and television talk show host says that "God is the answer to America's problems," he is not speaking of the one true and living God of the Bible. No, dear friends. Understand what these men are really saying. They are speaking not of the God of the Bible, but of the pagan deity of Mormonism.

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A World of Difference

Dear friends, do you see why it was such a great evil for men who call themselves Evangelical leaders to stand on the platform of a rally that was led by a Mormon, attended by half a million people, and viewed by millions of others on television, and to say with Mormon leaders that "God is the answer" and that Evangelicals must work together with Mormons to preach "God" to the nation?

When a Mormon speaks of "God" he speaks of a being who was once a man and became a god, and is one of many gods in Mormon theology. When a true Christian speaks of God, he speaks of the one true and living God of the Bible, the one eternally existent God revealed in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dear friend, there is a world of difference between the Mormon "God" and the Christian God. Indeed, it is the difference between Satan and God. It is the difference between Hell and Heaven. It is the difference between eternal death and eternal life. Listen to the words that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church – the church that had embraced inclusivism and was putting up with paganism. He wrote this – second Corinthians chapter six, beginning at verse fourteen:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers... What communion has light with darkness?... [W]hat part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?...Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord...

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Dear friends, the true believer in Jesus Christ individually, and the true church of Jesus Christ as a body, can have no fellowship, no communion, no partnership, with pagan Mormonism and its monstrous counterfeit doctrine of "God the Father".

And as we continue in our next message, we are going to see this picture of paganism in Mormon teaching unfold even further. Mormon theology concerning Jesus Christ is equally horrible and equally pagan. We need to understand that the "Jesus" they teach is not the authentic Jesus of the Bible. I hope you will join us on our next broadcast, as we continue our study of this very vital issue.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is that of the Great Commission: to preach the Gospel to the world, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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Above all, please pray for us. The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to all we do. We thank you for bringing this ministry before the throne of grace.

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of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**