

The Gospel News

The Church of Jesus Christ Lifts Up the Standard

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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Raise the Standard



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Isaiah 59:18-20: According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

"...When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Satan is the enemy to God. As God's plan for salvation is challenged, the time will come when the devil will be bound and eventually destroyed. What is that standard to accomplish this? It is God's standard of righteousness. As we, His disciples, work to lift God's standard of righteousness within us, Satan loses his powers against us. Righteousness binds Satan as he will be bound during the Peaceful Reign. It is the righteousness—the power of God—that will destroy him as identified in Revelation 20.

From the time Lucifer and his host of followers were cast from God's presence, evil has opposed our God's goodness and plan for His creation. From the beginning, in Eden, the Tree of Life stood as a representative of His plan for redemption and salvation. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, fell from God's presence due to a sin called "disobedience," a spiritual battle began. The evil one has sought to destroy His creation, even to the extent of directly testing the Son of God, Jesus Christ, while He lived on Earth.

Isaiah 14:12-15: How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

As Christ worked to establish a new way of servitude and relationship with God, the devil attempted to thwart the growth of God's Kingdom on Earth. Man has been given the possibility to regain that original relationship with God as it was in Eden. Through His plan of salvation, eternal life was established. Thank God for His mercy.

The early Church organized by Christ experienced growth as well as attacks from Satan, mainly through the Pharisees. How easily this effort could have been destroyed, even in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. But God has His purpose for all things and is in charge of life's expectations and future fulfillments of His promises.

From the persecutions of believers throughout every generation, from the trials given the Apostles of old, even those of the present day, the defeat of the persecutor is set and the Spirit of God will take His disciples home.

As the early Church grew, Satan continued to create obstacles to overcome. Making a simple but pure belief system into a national religion (approximately 300 A.D.), the emperor Constantine brought together church and state in order to take control of the believers and their religion. It was a fatal blow to true religion. From approximately 560 A.D., early world history captured a period of time known as the Dark Ages. We refer to it as a spiritual apostasy. The true gospel had seemingly disappeared. The authority and power of God was no more seen, and only a few whose hearts were set upon the Lord were witnesses to his power. The "woman"—God's authority and true Gospel—was hidden in the wilderness.

Revelations 12:6-12 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

(Continued on page 4)



Every year, (except this year),
GMBA campers select
a camp theme song,
(except this year).
So every year, we don't speak
to theme songs in our grid.
(Except this year.)



1976
Director: Joe Ross
Augusta, Kansas

Theme Song:

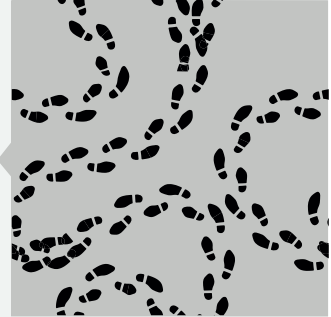
1982
Director: Bobby Nicklow, Jr.
Massanetta Springs, VA

Theme Song:



1987
Director: Randy Ciccati
Scripps College,
Claremont, CA

Theme Song:



1993
Director: Joel Calabrese
Antiochian Village,
Ligonier, PA

Theme Song:



2004
Director: Zachary Jackson
Saginaw Valley
State University,
Saginaw, MI

Theme Song:

2010
Director: Lucas Martorana
Furman University
Greenville, SC

Theme Song:



2016
Director: Alyssa Maddox
California University
of Pennsylvania,

Theme Song:



(Answers are on bottom of page 11)

BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck



Eighty-nine years ago, on September 27, 1933, Brother Dominick Pagnozzi of New Jersey had a vision predicting the beginning of World War II, which began when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

"A large personage with great arms appeared to me in a vision, and he extended his hand to me and gave me a letter and told me to open the letter and read it. "And when you have read it," he continued, "tell the words that you find in it to the two head ones of the church which you belong" and the personage disappeared. I opened the letter and read the contents of it and it read thus: To The Church of Jesus Christ in general, A great woe is coming and blessed are the saints which are not found sleeping. When I finished reading these words the letter gradually went out of my hands and went away. In a dream later in 1937 Bro. Dominick dreamt that a robust young stranger entered their meeting and extended his arms towards the congregation, and with a voice that made the building shake said, "You lament now, but wait until 1939 and see what happens." He disappeared and I awoke."

"Jesus calls, "Are you sleeping? There is so much to do. It's not the time to be idle, I have labor for you. If you say that you love me, feed my lambs and my sheep. Take a walk on the water, take a step on the deep!"

- #102 If You Would Labor in Zion, The Songs of Zion.

Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America

Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



“Mens et Manus” By Brother Doug Obradovich

“If you love me, keep my commandments” – John 14:15

The motto for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is “Mens et manus” (Mind and Hand). MIT states it is only through the combination of thought and practical action that current and future problems can be solved. It is through the application (Hand) of theory (Mind) that real change and real difference take place.

Jesus effected genuine change and difference in His abbreviated life. Throughout His 33 years, His mode of communication was word of mouth. He expounded via face-to-face interactions, whether one on one or in small groups. He never enjoyed the advantages of instant internet transmission. Nor did He experience high-speed mass transportation. Instead, His feet carried Him approximately 3,200 miles during His 3-year ministry, limited to a small region of the Middle East.

Yet, change and difference took place

because He applied what He had learned. His education was transmitted from His Father's mouth to His ears. Theory presented. Theory received. Theory applied. Mens et manus.

James must have been recalling the Savior's wonderful example when he penned, “Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). My college semesters in Physical Education ended with both written (theory) and physical (application) exams. It was during this period of life that I had a dream. I had passed the written portion concerning God's Word. In taking the physical piece, I was disrupted by the final bell. God was showing me that I understood the theory but failed in applying the knowledge. Mens NO manus!

Paul spoke to the spirituality of our actions, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Colossians 3:17). Mens et manus. My dream uncovered the irony of learning the Word, which brings additional accountability. No reading or hearing, no accountability, “Where there is no law given, there is no condemnation” (2 Nephi 9:25). However, left ignorant and unaware, our purpose to enjoy the fulness of our intended

spiritual life is lost, “Men are that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). This joy is sourced through a deeper understanding of Jesus' message and cause: God's theory learned. Once learned, this promised joy activates Jesus' mission and purpose: God's theory applied.

Mens et manus. Jesus rewarded the doers, “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when He cometh shall find so doing” (Matthew 24:46). Just as it is in business, where we teach our middle managers, “Catch your people doing something right and reward their behavior” (“find so doing”). Finally, Jesus taught, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Maybe He was expanding to, “Mens et cor et manus” (Mind and heart and hand).

With spirituality, “Mens et manus” teaches us to search God's Word, learn God's message, and apply oneself wholeheartedly to serving. By doing so, we can help solve current and future challenges through real change and real difference. And there is no greater change, nor more significant difference, than mankind's transformation from natural to spiritual, sinner to saint, lost to found, damnation to salvation.

And this takes place in glorious fashion, one “mens” at a time!

Standard (continued from cover)

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

But a spark of disenchantment grew through the Reformation period. Good men searched for the truth once again. Religions were organized through their efforts. Man was struggling to experience spiritual life once again.

It wasn't until 1,260 years later that a rebirth (approximately 1820 A.D.) of the true gospel and His priesthood authority was seen through the Restoration movement. The Gospel was alive and restored through the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon. The latter book was revealed to augment the missing scriptures of the Holy Bible that traileed Satan's attacks during the period of apostasy. The book also made known God's plan of salvation for His chosen people (Israel) and the world's population—all who are willing to come.

The standard of God's righteousness through Christ is being lifted again through the re-establishment of His church, The Church of Jesus Christ. This organization is affiliated with no other religion on Earth. The Church holds fast to the principles and teachings of Christ for all generations to come. Although troubled early on with organizational problems created through the evil one, The Church has overcome and continues to fulfill our Lord's will to obtain righteousness, that all who desire may be saved and return to the presence of God for eternity.

Now is the time! It is our time personally to seek that standard of righteousness possessed by Christ. As we look forward to latter-day events to unfold, we recognize our responsibility before us. We are to assist in the building of God's Kingdom on Earth. As a family of disciples, we depend upon that same spirit and power as possessed by Christ and bestowed upon His early Apostles and Church. The devil is not the victor. God is on our side. This is a time of spiritual courage, confidence, and earnestness. The Holy Spirit is with us to lift our standard of righteousness even while the evil one remains about, seeking to destroy as many as he can.

And so as Christ chose twelve to lead His Church, he chooses you to be one of His disciples. He invites you to join Him on the mountain of righteousness. The question before all is, "How can I grow closer to Christ and obtain the righteous standard He would require of me?"

While serving mankind on Earth, Christ saw in His followers their spiritual lack of understanding but also recognized their zeal to learn His new way. The disciples had not achieved the concept of true righteousness. Current day religion was that of observing Old Testament laws. Serving was more an outward action rather than an inward change. Christ's offer of His true Gospel taught an expectation of a heart-and-mind-changing experience. It was a new way of life spiritually. The condition of the heart was/is of greater importance than the outward appearance. The "burnt offering" was now secondary to that of "obedience." It was not intended that man's natural life would be one of comfort. The life of a believer has always been interwoven with trouble and

sorrow. But those problems have served as an encouragement for one to seek a higher plane of spiritual life. Christ offered those early Apostles and followers an explanation for acquiring righteousness. It is known as the "Sermon on the Mount," as found in Matthew the fifth chapter, as well as in Luke. Each of the beatitudes draws the follower into the realm of Christ's world of righteousness.

And so shall the righteous man or woman rejoice in the Lord and experience God's blessings toward her/him as Christ had promised. Oh, how great a reward. Our Lord encourages you to reach higher and be His saints, believing and receiving the great promises. Bring others to Christ through His Spirit that is within you.

A true disciple is the salt of the earth. He or she is used to encourage a world from sin to righteousness. The disciple's complement to this life is to sweeten this earthly existence, that others may see the Kingdom that God has designed. As Brothers and Sisters, we bring light to a darkened environment. Hope is realized by others through our example of trusting God through Jesus Christ. Our degree of righteousness dictates our level of spiritual accomplishments. The "Great Commission" given at the close of the Apostolic era, Matthew 28, instructs us to go to all ends of the world to teach and baptize into Christ's salvation. The "Divine Commission" instructs The Church of Jesus Christ to go to Israel through Joseph, the Native Americans, to teach them of God's promises through Abraham and His desire to re-establish a close relationship with them. This effort opens the door to nations being converted. Through righteousness, imagine what can be accomplished in our day! As God looks to you, so does our Church need your total support.

Ephesians 6:10-20: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, Pete Giannetti, John Griffith, Scott Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Loyalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

What advice can you share with the students starting school this month?

"Let your light shine at school, at work, and at play." - Brother Michael McGuire, Cape Coral, FL Mission

"Pray before every test! God won't give you all the answers; you still have to study. But He will open your mind and help you to remember what you studied. Always be kind and a friend to others, no matter how different from you they are." - Sister Kathy Golling, Monongahela, PA Branch

"Keep your focus on God." - Sister Kerri Mackley, Vanderbilt, PA Branch

"Pray before going to school and always trust in God. Study and do your best. Choose your friends wisely and be kind to everyone." - Sister Carla King, Lorain, OH branch

Looking back, looking ahead – which way are we looking?

By Evangelist Mark Kovacic

Some celebrate September 21st as a holiday and some don't. That's ok. Apostle Paul said "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike." (Romans 14:5) So what holiday am I referring to? Joseph Smith Jr.'s first visit by a messenger of God, Moroni, in 1827; thus ushering in the restoration of Christ Jesus' Church. As a Church we celebrate very few holidays and I wondered about that. I finally came to the conclusion that it is due to our forward-looking attitude. What do I mean? Let's take a look at the two perspectives: back and forward looking.

First, looking back. Studying the past, i.e., history, gives us an understanding of what, why, and how things happened. Sometimes we are amazed at how the words of King Solomon come to pass that "there's nothing new under the sun." But in the same manner, there are numerous historical accounts that we can learn from.

Now let us consider forward looking. As a Church, our general tendency has been to look forward, to what's ahead, and to where are we going. I think that is good. The more hope we have in the future, the easier it is for us to endure/overcome adversities, trials, and tribulations. I would call us forward-looking people. Even our publications are forward looking, from the Saints Hymnal (Preface... "It is cheering to sing the rising glories of Zion") to the Songs of Zion (at least 45 of the 239 songs mention Zion), from the Ensign (the first newsletter published by the Church) to the Gospel News, from our Articles of Faith to our Dissertation of the Faith and Doctrine. I think you get the idea.

I am bringing up this fact simply to establish my point. Now notice how hope is used in these following scriptures: "...hope for things which are not seen, which are true" (Alma 32:21); "...which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast..." (Ether 12:4); "...hope for those things which they have not seen" (Ether 12:8); and "wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared" (Ether 12:32). And, "...if ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity" (Moroni 10:22). Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men" (2 Nephi 31: 20).

When we meet people oftentimes they ask us about our spiritual hopes or religious expectations; they want to know why we are positive in a negative situation. When appropriate we share not only our hope in soul salvation through Jesus Christ (our conversion – testimony), but all of the other hopes we have, such as for the gathering of Israel, the building of the New Jerusalem, and the Peaceful Reign. We implement Apostle Peter's words, "be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

So, is it wrong to look back? Absolutely not! We need to understand where we came from and what others have borne (Ama 5:6-9). We learn from their adversities, trials, and tribulations (and should I add their mistakes). Why reinvent the wheel every generation when we can simply study the past and glean from it the actions taken by others and how to apply them to ourselves? We are encouraged to study the word of God, meditate upon it, and do good works ("And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall...do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted" Jacob 2:19).

The only way we can truly grow in the Gospel is to take what we have learned from those before us, apply those insights gained, then seek new revelations, and finally use our new knowledge and understanding to improve our lives and our service to God.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Carolynn O'Connor
gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
734-260-0213

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Chuck Maddox, Jr.
chuck.maddoxjr@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
937-266-2506

CONSULTANTS
Alex Gentile
Paul Liberto
Leonard A. Lovullo
Anthony Scolaro
Cathy Gentile

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Dianne Maddox

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Ken Lombardo

COPY EDITOR
Anthony Scolaro

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Sophia O'Connor

QUORUM OF 70 EDITOR
Q70 Communication Team
q70team@gmail.com
313-820-4503

GMBA EDITOR
Kayla Smith
aidenandlilly13@gmail.com
703-336-3297

GENERAL CIRCLE EDITOR
LuAnn Carson
uannie@comcast.net
724-518-0491

REGION EDITORS

ATLANTIC COAST
Michael Zaino
michael.zaino@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
732-289-4191

GREAT LAKES
Kim Komjathy
komjathy1976@gmail.com
313-461-3176

MIDWEST
midwest@thechurchofjesuschrist.org

PACIFIC
Jody Greger
cjcsldr@yahoo.com
209-810-4880

PENN-MID ATLANTIC
Ray Intrieri
lemans65@gmail.com
724-622-7249

SOUTHEAST
Mandy Griffith
mandygriffith324@gmail.com
727-264-7905

SOUTHWEST
Anthony Scolaro
anthony.scolaro@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
732-259-3861

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DONATIONS MAY BE SENT TO: 6899 Bayshore Dr., Lake Worth, FL 33462.



What people are saying!

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"This might sound cliché but honestly it far exceeded my expectations. We spent so much time and conversation and planning and preparation — getting so many people to help out and try some new or different things. God is so good and He provided the increase to our efforts. I was so blessed by the unity and willingness of everyone there to dive in and participate. It made all the activities just a great time together. We had tremendous amount of fun, fellowship, and spiritual growth." - **Brother Lucas Martorana, GMBA President**

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"It was better than I thought it was going to be." - **Marri Donaldson, first-time camper**

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"The best part about this camp was seeing young people step into roles that would normally be filled by older brothers and sisters. It was great to see the young people mesh in ways I haven't seen in a long time. It really stirred up the Spirit." - **Brother Bryan Champine, oldest young person**

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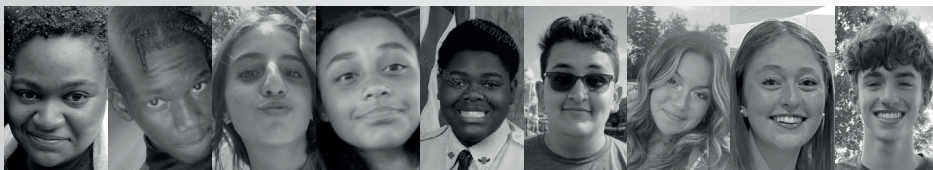
"This camp was amazing! I feel so blessed to be a part of it. I am so thankful that the young people got to spend time together uninterrupted and get to know each other and get closer to God." - **Sister Sydney Lovalvo, Camp Director**

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"My advice to the young people is to stay strong until they can be with their peers again, which means staying in the word of God as much as they can because that is what keeps us close. Always look to God for anything in their lives whether it's big or small because the Lord loves that and He wants to be involved in our lives." - **Brother Nate Hynes, Mentor**

.....

"My favorite part was meeting so many new people and feeling the Spirit of God." - **Sister Ava Lesperance, youngest camper**



9 souls asked for their baptism at campout





1

Spirit filled week

.....

2

Apostles who joined us

.....

3

New GMBA officers

.....

4

Rec teams

.....

9

Baptism requests

.....

9

Hours of mentor training

.....

8

Disney Karaoke songs

.....

30

Random items used to perform skits

.....

27

Branches represented

.....

60,000+

**steps taken by camp director
Sister Sydney Loyalvo**



THE CHURCH HAS A NEW STUDY TOOL AVAILABLE!

WITNESSING
MIRACLES



HISTORICAL
EVIDENCE FOR THE
RESURRECTION
AND BOOK OF MORMON

JOSHUA GEHLY

Buy Brother Josh Gehly's new book,

Witnessing Miracles: Historical Evidence for the Resurrection and Book of Mormon

on Amazon today

Jesus Christ's resurrection rocked Jerusalem and disrupted the course of religious history. The miracle of the resurrection challenged entrenched dogmas of Judaism. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon launched a new religious movement across the American frontier and equally confronted church tradition. Both the establishment of Christianity and its restoration solely depend upon the truth claims of their founding miracles. This begs the question, does any evidence actually exist for the resurrection of Jesus Christ? What about the golden plates from which the Book of Mormon is supposedly translated?

Ordained evangelist and author—Joshua Gehly—guides readers through the trenches of historiography to examine the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as presented by leading apologetic researchers like William Lane Craig, Michael Licona and Gary Habermas. Using a strict historical method of inference to the best explanation, the case is made for the miraculous claims of Jesus Christ resurrected.

The exact same method is applied to evaluate and compare the circumstances regarding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Nothing is concealed from investigation, including treasure seeking by Joseph Smith, financial failures and excommunication of founding church leadership. From the criteria of a hypothesis established by one miracle (the resurrection), the claims of a second (the Book of Mormon) get tested to the same standard.

Can a miracle be the best explanation for the empty tomb? Can the Book of Mormon hold up against historical scrutiny? Does heavenly intervention account for two of the largest religious movements of the last two thousand years? Finally, after these questions get answered, the gospel message is compared between the New Testament and Book of Mormon texts to see if the risen Jesus truly delivered the same gospel to different people after His resurrection. *Witnessing Miracles: Historical Evidence for the Resurrection and Book of Mormon* bridges a gap few have tried to cross to come up with the best explanation of the facts...which might surprise you.



Apostasy

By Brother Jerry Valenti

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant" (Isaiah 24:5).

The above prophecy of Isaiah refers to a period of time in history known as the Apostasy, during which the gospel fell away and priesthood authority was removed from the earth. This was a result of people changing the ordinances of Jesus Christ, thereby breaking the everlasting covenant that was stated in Matthew 28:19-20. Here are 5 amazing facts regarding ordinances that were changed, contributing to the Apostasy of the Church.

1 Baptism - Jesus Christ set the example for baptism, insisting that John the Baptist would baptize Him to "fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). He instructed His disciples that when people were being baptized, to "immerse them in the water" (3 Nephi 11:26). It was emphasized that baptism was for people who were old enough to have sinned and were capable of repenting of their sins—it was not for babies or little children (see Moroni 8:9-11). As time passed, sprinkling replaced immersion, babies began to be baptized and, in some faiths, baptism became optional, just a nice thing to do if you felt you wanted to.

2 Communion - When Jesus set the example for communion (see Luke 22:17-20), He distributed bread and wine (in a single cup) to His apostles in remembrance of His body and blood that would be given for us.

People later changed the ingredients to wafers, grape juice, water, etc. In some cases, the single cup was changed to individual cups. Whereas Jesus said that the communion was for baptized members only (see 3 Nephi 18:28-30), some felt that this restriction was unnecessary.

3 Anointing with Oil - "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). The use of oil in praying for the sick was eventually eliminated.

4 Feetwashing- After Jesus washed the feet of His apostles, He told them, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). This set the example for feet washing among the members of the Church.

The ordinance of feet washing was eventually eliminated.

5 Blessing Children - When His disciples tried to chase away the children, Jesus instead took them in His arms and blessed them (see Mark 10:13-16). When He was with the Nephites in America, "he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them" (3 Nephi 17:21) and angels then came down from heaven to minister to them. When the church began baptizing little children, the blessing of children as Jesus did it was discontinued.

To end on a happy note: When the gospel was restored, all of the above ordinances were restored as well. Praise God!

Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Awake, My Soul! By Sister Luann Carson



Do you ever hit the snooze button when your alarm goes off? Pulling the covers over your head, do you think 'just a few more minutes in bed, I don't want it to be morning yet?' Or do you jump out of bed excited for the day, knowing that you have plans for wonderful things? It's still a little dark, but there is work to be done! "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11).

Spiritually, there is work to be done. "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed" (Alma 34:32 & 33). Now is the time to prepare to meet our Lord. According to scripture, rest will come soon enough. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest" (Hebrews 4:11).

Beyond our personal salvation, there is more work to be done. According to God's promises, we have a great day ahead of us. 1 Nephi 22: 8 reads, "And after our seed [Israel] is scattered the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders." The scripture assures us that God's plan will be fulfilled. Now is the time to jump out of bed and get to work! It's not the hour to hit snooze and pull the covers over our heads. There is work to do to bring forth that day we read of in scripture. With expectation, we labor toward the great promises that God has revealed to us. The time is now to work enthusiastically, for the morning has come.

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion." (1 Nephi 13:37)

Blessings at the Mesa Branch

By Sister Valerie Dulisse

On Sunday, March 20 2022 our congregation met at the beach of Saguaro Lake, among the mountains of Arizona for a blessed event. Today two of our young ladies, Audrey Thompson and Cattée Huttenberger would be baptized! Brother Pete Giannetti baptized Sister Audrey Thompson, and Brother David Picciuto, baptized his granddaughter Sister Cattée Huttenberger. The baptisms were beautiful, the Spirit of God was so prevalent among us, and after witnessing their baptisms, we met back at the Mesa branch and



experienced a baby blessing as well.

Brother Michael Watson performed the blessing of Alexander J. Heinz, the son of Caleb and Shelby Heinz. Alexander is the grandson of Sister Wendy Jordan-Greenland. Scripture

was shared regarding Moses asking Aaron to bless the children of Israel.

Brother Jim Huttenberger of Irvine, CA Branch shared that it was a tremendous blessing to be able to attend his granddaughter Cattée's baptism today. Our

brother opened our service with Isaiah 61:1-3. Jesus came to fix what was wrong in our lives, to take us out of darkness and into the light. He came to heal the broken-hearted. What a glorious life we enjoy as the people of God! Jesus is a Savior



who sees our afflictions. We are presently in a period of tribulation. Brother Jim shared that the gift of tongues was given recently in Irvine, and the interpretation was given, "Normal' is not coming back—but I AM!" He exhorted us to sing praises to the Lord. He deserves it, and He loves our praises! Let us run with patience the race that is before us, our brother told us. What a day is coming, when there will be no affliction or mourning—only joy and peace. We are His, and there is no better place for us to be, than with the Lord.

We then witnessed both of our new sisters in Christ come forward for the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. Sister Audrey Thompson received the ordinance from Brother Austin Landrey. Sister Cattée Huttenberger received the ordinance from her grandfather, Brother Jim Huttenberger.

Both of our new sisters in Christ expressed themselves in testimony, thanking God for being in their lives, giving them such indescribable peace, and for the love of the family of God surrounding them. A luncheon and time of fellowship followed our beautiful meeting.

We praise God for this glorious day!

On July 10, 2022 the Mesa, AZ Branch witnessed two ordinations; Brother Jonathan Scolaro was ordained into the office of Elder, and Brother Edward Greenland was ordained into the office of Deacon. Brother Timothy Scolaro washed the feet of his son Brother Jonathan, and Brother Jonathan was ordained an Elder by Apostle Brother Pete Gianetti. Brother Edward Greenland's feet were washed by Brother Austin Landrey, and he was ordained into the office of Deacon by Brother Michael Watson from the Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ Branch.

Brother Michael Watson spoke on John 21, in which Peter, Thomas, Nathanael and other disciples were fishing, but had caught nothing so far. Jesus told the disciples to cast the net on the right side of the boat, and they would find fish. They cast the net there, and the net was so filled with fish that it could not be drawn into their boat! After they ate the fish and bread that were prepared, Jesus asked Peter the question 3 times, "Lovest thou Me?" Each time, Peter answered, "Thou knowest I love thee." Jesus then answered Peter each of the 3 times, "Feed my sheep." This is the directive that our Lord gives to all of His ministers, to feed the flock the Words of Life, that we may be His kingdom here on Earth and receive His gift of salvation.

Brother Pete Giannetti followed, with his main text from 2 Timothy 4:1-2, the Apostle Paul's instruction to Timothy as a minister. Brother Pete shared that verse 2 was a favorite of Apostle V. James Lovalvo: "Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Brother Pete explained that these were words of instruction to our Brother Jonathan and our Church ministry as well as to Timothy, regarding their responsibilities to the children of God, and that they as Christ's ministry must be firm in their commitment to upholding these standards as they represent Christ here on earth. He also included in his exhortation the ordained office of deacon, and the many responsibilities and duties our Brother Edward would perform as a servant to God's people in this beautiful office.

Our brothers were then given an opportunity to express themselves. Brother Jonathan shared a scripture that is inspirational to him, Moroni 9:6, regarding the command to labor diligently while we are in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of our souls. We have seen Brother Jonathan take this to heart, with his diligence in serving God through his time as a teacher in our branch, helping out with VBS here and at other branches, his music ministry, and teaching both MBA and Sunday school lessons.

Brother Edward shared how in his youth, he had always helped his grandmother clean the church he grew up in, and sang the spiritual songs that the youth sang, including "This Little Light of Mine," and that desire and spirit of servitude has stayed with him all of these years. He then expressed his love for all of the brothers and sisters. We have witnessed his desire to do so much already to minister to the saints in our branch, helping the deacons even before his ordination today!

A beautiful luncheon and time of fellowship followed as we celebrated our brothers' answer to the call that God has placed upon their hearts.



The Big Fat Lie

And Peter said to her, "tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" (the amount her husband had lied about).

And she said, "Yes, for so much."

Then Peter said to her "How is it that you have agreed together to lie and tempt the Spirit of the Lord? (who knows and sees everything, all lies and all truths)

"The men that buried your husband are at the door and they shall carry you out also." Then she fell down straightway and died and was carried away to be buried beside her husband.

And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many who heard about the power of God. People saw and understood that God truly does exist and God knows

our every doing. And the Church continued to grow, but the fakes, liars, and false people stayed away.

So, when we find ourselves making up a lie, we need to quickly repent (be sorry) and stop lying. The Lord will help us if we ask him. We can change. Or if we already have done the wrong thing, we can again ask Jesus to help us make it right, to not lie, to be sorry, and to hope that if we have harmed someone they will also forgive us.

We serve a living God. He wants us to know Him and trust Him. He wants us to be able to talk with him. He is not a statue, a good luck charm, or fake. Our God is living, powerful, and He cares for us.

With love, Your friend, *Sister Jan*

In the days of the early Church, right after Jesus died, there was so much love between the brothers and sisters that they shared everything by choice! No one would have hunger or be without a place to stay. No one had to be alone or without loving care. Children weren't hurt, many people loved and shared with them. There was no one who lacked anything.

Many people decided to sell whatever they owned and bring the money to the Church to help others and pay for what was needed. God did not demand this, but of course He knew what was in each person's heart just as He knows what's in each of our hearts today.

There was a couple named Sapphira and Ananias. They saw others who sold land and houses and gave the money to be shared by everyone. (See Acts 4:34-37.) Maybe they wanted to look important too. So, they sold some land they owned and both decided to keep part of the money for themselves and lie. It was okay to keep part of their money, but it was not okay to lie, especially to God.

Ananias brought the money to Peter, the leader of the Church, and acted like he was giving everything. But God saw the big lie and so did Peter. He said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? It was yours before you sold it and yours when you thought in your heart about doing this. You have not lied unto men but unto God."

And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and died. And a great fear came on all who heard these things. And the young men came and wrapped up his body and carried him out and buried him.

And about 3 hours later, his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in.

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September Blessing Bits

BB What Once Was Lost, Now is Found

- A few years ago, not long after my father passed away, we were at my mom's looking for an album. My father used to write poems for every family occasion. This album was special because it contained all of the poems and letters he wrote my mom while they were dating and newlyweds. We looked on the shelf of the closet where we thought it was kept and couldn't find it. We even went further and removed everything from the shelf—it wasn't there. My mom always taught us to pray over everything, no matter how small or insignificant, so she spent the entire night in prayer that we might find this album. The next day I went back to my mom's, thinking I would give it one more try. We opened the closet door and there was the album at the front of the shelf, even hanging off the edge slightly. We have the most amazing God who will take the time to answer even the smallest request! - Sister Kathy Golling, Monongahela, PA Branch

BB One Step at a Time - I've been going through some difficult trials lately—most days, life feels as if it's swirling around me. A few weeks ago, I found myself at Church in the Oldham County mission. Brother Doug Obradovich was preaching about having faith and staying strong in our walk with the Lord.

He reminded us that the evil one is constantly trying to sway us from a close walk with the Lord. We had several visitors that day, and rather than stand and give my testimony, I remained in my seat and didn't speak. The rest of the day it had been weighing on my heart that I should have shared my testimony and given God the glory for all that He's done in my life. I stopped what I was doing to record my testimony and post it to the Oldham County Facebook page. I realized that no matter what I'm going through in my life—there's always more climbing to do—and I'll never pass up an opportunity to share that God is always faithful to me. - Brother Nick Yepko, Oldham County, KY Mission

BB Short, But Answered - A little over 20 years ago I was driving from Virginia to my parents' home in Pennsylvania for the Thanksgiving holiday. It was late on Wednesday night and driving through the mountains in West Virginia, there was very little cell service. As I was driving, I could tell that the early winter weather was worsening, so I kept my speed down and stayed in the right lane to avoid speeding cars. As I crested a hill, I put my foot on the brake pedal and it was rock hard. Just then, my car's engine completely shut off! In a moment of panic I directed my car to what I hoped was the shoulder, as the road was covered with snow, and just said "Lord,

help me!" At that moment, my foot went down and the car stopped in its tracks. I was able to turn the key and the car started right up. I thank God that He answered that quick, short, panicked prayer! - Sister Kristy Zaino, Mt. Laurel, NJ Branch

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at eksanchor@gmail.com. [in approximately 150 words].
Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.



Question for this month: What is your favorite book in the Bible or Book of Mormon and why?



Answer from last month: What advice can you share with the students starting school this month?

"Pray before going to school and always trust in God. Study and do your best. Choose your friends wisely and be kind to everyone." - Sister Carla King, Lorain, OH branch

Turn to page 4 for answers to this question.



Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; - I Nephi 21:22