



Chapter 26: Pride or Worship God, Revelation 1-3

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked...” (Revelation 3:17 KJV)

The worst thing that any individual or church can do is to feel sufficient within themselves—that they do not need God or anybody- because in so doing they leave no room for the grace of God! This is no new problem: it is only an old problem with new disguises. There are only seven New Testament churches mentioned in the introduction to the book of Revelation; although relatively new as New Testament churches, still in the First Century, each of those seven churches had problems; but one of them in particular had the glaring problem of self-sufficiency.

Self sufficiency or self reliance is difficult for an individual or church to see without an objective and outside warning. Look at what this church at Laodicea thought of itself: we are rich, we have plenty of goods, and we are self-sufficient since we have “need of nothing”! Look at what the Ascended Christ speaking to the Apostle John thought of this same church: you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked! Quite a contrast between what the church thought of themselves, and what Christ thought of the church. While throughout this chapter and the rest of the book the Mormons will be used as the extreme example of those who are self-sufficient, depending on their own works for salvation, and that is one of their official doctrines as stated by Joseph Smith in THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, this problem is by no means isolated to the Mormons nor to the religious. After all, Mormons are only about the 14th largest denomination in the world. Now this is an INTERNAL PROBLEM; and that is part of the reason that it is so difficult to see by an individual or church. We need to blame everything on Satan or someone else EXTERNALLY—the old matter of “the devil made me do it”, while we tend to overlook the greater problem of ourselves and the fact that as the Apostle James quoted from the Old Testament that “the spirit (the human spirit) that dwelleth within us lusteth to envy” (James 4:5)

26-1: External Church Problems, Revelation 2.

These seven churches of Asia Minor, typical of all New Testament churches, had many external problems; and these like the internal problems of self-sufficiency and a sinful human

spirit were placed up front as the total summary of problems before the vision of God in control of most of the book of Revelation. Let us briefly note some of these external problems of the churches, not forgetting that these are also individual problems as churches are composed of a certain discrete number of individual Christians.

1. Liars who claimed to be Apostles of Jesus Christ in the church at Ephesus, Revelation 2:2. The history of civilization is replete with attempts of various groups to number the elect of God in a circle about themselves; and Joseph Smith tried to do it first with three more Bibles, then with establishment of the only church and with himself as the Prophet; and then with both the quorum of the seventy and the Apostles.

2. The Ephesian church had the works of the Nicolaitans to contend with: Revelation 2:6, works or “deeds” which this church hated and God also hated.

3. Tribulation and poverty surrounding the church at Smyrna, Revelation 2:9.

4. Also being in the same community as a “synagogue of Satan”, and listening to those worshipers blasphemy as they claimed to be Jews, the chosen people of God, Revelation 2:9. If you study Mormonism closely you will find that what has happened instead of the Restored Gospel is the Restored Jewish Religion. They have restored everything about the First Century Hebrew religion that Christ came to do away with: the Temple, good works for salvation, sacrifice, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and worshipping God with their lips while their hearts are far away.

5. The surety of suffering and the fear of suffering, Revelation 2:10.

6. The church at Pergamos which had to perform Christian works, uphold the Christian faith, and to speak the name of Christ in a very community which was considered as the “seat of Satan”, Revelation 2:13. Allowing only a few to become temple members and “card carrying” Mormons in the Utah vernacular with secret rites of sealing is the very opposite of the truth of Christianity which is to be shouted from the housetop. You don’t light a candle and hide it in a locked temple.

7. Satan was so active in the community of Pergamos that a Christian had actually been physically martyred, and so active that Christ referred to the community as “where Satan dwelleth”.

8. The church in the community of Thyatira had a problem that was both external and internal (Revelation 2:20-24): Jezebel, a prophetess was the external problem, and the internal problem was that the church not only allowed her to teach to them but also accepted her as a prophetess. We will be as bad if we accept Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, or even the current LDS President Ezra Taft Benson as a Prophet. In fact since you will find the God of the Mormons and the Jesus of the Mormons not to be the real God and Jesus of the Bible, the

admonition of II John is upon us of not accepting them into our homes or bidding them god-speed.

9. I suppose that the problem of the church in Sardis was also external as well as internal: externally they had the reputation in the community and perhaps in the State of a real First New Testament Church, but internally they were either “dead” or near dead, Revelation 3:1-4. Here is where we need to deal with the problem of appearance versus the reality in the sight of God. Where Mormons have faked many people out including their own people is in the appearance of faithfulness to the Bible and to Christ while secretly they have become disciples of Satan, the lie, distortions, and half-truths. We need to think about what has impressed us about the Mormons—things like a pretended emphasis on family, on evangelism, on good music, on talented speakers, and good works; and then we need to see how in Christian churches these appearances can also exist without the reality of the worship of God with the heart.

10. The real problem of the church at Philadelphia was in the form of a challenge: Christ had opened the door before them of a challenging opportunity that no man or group of men could shut including the synagogue of Satan, the Jews, that were influential in that community, Revelation 3:7-9.

11. Likewise the previously mentioned problem of the church at Laodicea, that of being lukewarm instead of cold or hot, could also be considered external as well as internal; for even as a cold body or hot body must radiate a temperature consistent with its own internal temperature, even so must Laodicea and all similar Christian churches today ultimately radiate externally what they consider most important internally; and if they consider themselves to be self sufficient without the need of help from God and from other Christians, then that self-centered ego will reflect to those outside the immediate community of the church itself.

26-2: Internal Problems

1. The prime internal problem of all the churches can be summarized as INTOLERANCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE. Chapter 2 and chapter 3 answer the question, “What do you do when most in your church and your denomination become intolerant of sound doctrine?” You may have done like I did for years in reading, teaching, and preaching, to overlook the fact that after each passage to one of the seven churches, there is an appendix. An appendix written not to the church or to the angel (pastor) of the church; but an appendix written to the individuals in the church. I like to call it the CHRIST FOR INDIVIDUALS APPENDIX.

2. The Ephesian church had the works of the Nicolaitans to contend with: Revelation 2:6, works or “deeds” which this church hated and God also hated. This was mentioned earlier in the External Problems, but actually it was both internal and external since the widespread First Century doctrine was widespread: it said essentially, “You can do whatever you want to do as

long as you are a Christian.” It has historically been easy for Baptists, who naturally according to the Bible emphasize “salvation by grace”, to adopt a practical extreme position of “since we are saved by grace, let us not worry about works.” Paul dealt with this question in Romans and Galatians when he said Bible believers might conclude “let us sin that grace may abound.” Baptists, as Bible believers, do believe in The Security of the Believer as a Baptist distinctive; but also we believe in the rest of the Bible. I recall as a young preacher in Hot Springs Arkansas teaching a study course on the book of James. Having always been committed to strict Bible exegesis, I taught right down through the book of James verse for verse, letting the Bible speak for itself. As the end of one session, an active churchmember of this large SBC church said, “Is this good Baptist doctrine?” My answer was essentially that the Baptist distinctive of all Baptist distinct doctrines is that the Bible is the Word of God: (1) divine in origin, (2) absolute in authority, (3) high fidelity in its communications, and (4) sufficient in its message. Many of the Baptist’s statements of faith talk about “the Bible is the sole criterion for faith and practice.”

{This has been eroded in Baptist churches as we ease further and further into the Falling Away, as churchmembers will no longer endure sound doctrine.**}** Someone has jokingly said, “The only difference between the Baptists and the Methodists is that Methodists believe in falling from grace but Baptists practice it. **{**By the way, let us not confuse “falling from grace” with The Falling Away. Baptist churchmembers will inevitably be part of the Falling Away from God, Christ, and sound doctrine of the Bible, and perhaps lead in it as the largest Protestant denomination. It is not a falling away from churchmembership as church attendance will actually go up as certain churches become more popular with and conformed to the world. The big difference between the two is that “falling from an initial work of grace in the heart, called the new birth is impossible. Even God can not deny His own children that have been born again by the power of God. However, when you get down to the nitty-gritty of the Falling Away as in the first falling away of the children of Israel in the wilderness over 20 years of age, there was never a work of grace there in the first place.**}**

3. Tribulation and poverty surrounding the church at Smyrna, Revelation 2:9. This was also an internal problem since it looks like the “poverty” and “tribulation” had come into the church. We should never fear being poor as Jesus came primarily to preach the Gospel to the poor. **{**Tribulation as a major problem will be discussed often in Revelation, but we should quote here the Scripture that “all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” It may not be physical but it must be there.**}**

8. The church in the community of Thyatira had a problem that was both external and internal (Revelation 2:20-24): Jezebel, a prophetess was the external problem, and the internal problem was that the church not only allowed her to teach to them but also accepted her as

a prophetess. I think as the Falling Away progresses with first an itching ears lack of endurance for sound doctrine because of personal desires, then a heaping up of itching ears comforting teachers and preachers, then a turning away from the truth and a subsequent turning into fables, that one of the fables will be to find “prophets” like Jezebel to tell the people what they want to hear. This can easily be done in churches of all denominations like the Mormons have done it: to claim latter day “prophets” with the same status as the Prophets of the Old Testament who held the office of a prophet, or even of the New Testament “prophets” who briefly exercised a predictive element in prophecy. **{**It is very important to realize that the Old Testament Prophets, whom we know spoke for God, had a message first of all for their generation, which is the same message for us today: like do not mistreat the people in the land, stay away from iniquity and immorality, don’t make an idol by putting anything or anyone in the place of God for first priority, and your nation will fall if you do not stay close to God. We are always told to test the prophets as to the consistency of their message with the Bible, and we are told above all to test the spirit of their message.**}**

As serious as all these external problems are, especially Satan and the servants of Satan whom we must never underestimate, the real problems that will ultimately destroy us are internal problems. The Apostle James illustrates these internal problems in the matter of public and private prayer. The problem is why do we pray and do not receive an answer or answers to our prayers? And the answer of the Apostle James is—

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.”
(James 4:3-5 KJV)

Furthermore the cure of this problem of human spirits that lust and of self sufficiency is given as the grace of God given to the humble in James 4:6-10.

Cure of Self-Sufficiency in James

1. The assurance is given that as surely as God resists the proud, He also as surely gives grace to the humble. The hope for those Mormons that have not seared their consciences by supporting lies and giving themselves over to the temple worship is: (1) Since Hebrews tells us that the way to please God is through faith, we do not know how much faith it takes to please God; and (2) Even as a child is placed by Christ as the example for faith, the amount of doctrine that a child actually knows is very minimal. In other words how much unsound doctrine as recorded in the revelations of the LDS can a Mormon believe and still exercise sufficient faith in the God of the Bible, the God of Creation, to be saved.

2. Every avenue of life, individually or collectively in the church, is to be submitted to God. There are to be no secrets or withholdings from God.

3. Satan is to be resisted, leaving him no alternative but to flee away from you. Satan wants clearly to be worshipped. That is the way he tempted Jesus. As the “god of this world” he had the power to take Jesus up to the top of the temple from which he could show Him all the kingdoms, then tell Him that all those would be His if He would only worship Satan. Jesus responded with: “God only should you worship and serve.”

4. Directly proportional to your drawing nigh to God is the nearness that He will respond in staying close to you. This is not works. This is just accepting the grace which God provides.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8,9 KJV)

5. The cleansing of external actions and internal motivations of the heart is a prerequisite to the grace of God. The problem with Mormons as an extreme example of others is that they maintain that you must be good enough for God to bless you.

The Cure of Self-Sufficiency in Revelation

1. Remember, repent, and do. That is remember your past from which you have fallen, repent of the changes that lost you your first love, and do the deeds that you did at first—Revelation 2:5.

2. Listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches about overcoming and eating of the tree of life to live eternally—Revelation 2:7.

3. Do not fear; be faithful even until death; and Christ will give you the crown of life, eternal life—Revelation 2:10.

4. Listen to what the Spirit says to the churches about overcoming in order to escape the Second Death—Revelation 2:11.

5. Repent of the teachings of Baalim and of the Nicolaitans- Revelation 2:14-16.

6. Listen overcomers, you can have the hidden manna and a new name written on a white stone—Revelation 2:17.

7. You that have not known the deep things of Satan hold fast to those things that you have as Christians—Revelation 2:24,13. This points out the group of people who have seared consciences as they have also learned the deep things of Satan, the kind of things you would learn secretly in a temple, and who have committed the unpardonable sin.

8. Listen overcomers, even as Christ receives authority from God the Father He will pass on authority to you. Authority is a very important matter in Christianity and religion. The Bibles of the Mormons do not even meet the same Canon criterion that was placed on New Testament letters before they were included in the Bible. Things such as they had to be written by an

Apostle or the associate of an Apostles, consistency of doctrinal teachings, and consistency with the teachings of Christ.

9. Wake up; strengthen the good things that remain but which also are about to die; and complete your deeds in the sight of God—Revelation 3:2.

10. Remember, keep it, and repent. That is, remember what you have received from God and heard from God; keep that you have heard and received; and repent of any changes from what you know to be from God- Revelation 3:3.

11. Listen overcomers, you can have white garments and Christ will confess your name before the Father and angels—Revelation 3:5.

12. Hold fast to what you have already so that none will also take away your crown of life, eternal life—Revelation 3:11.

13. Listen overcomers, you can be a pillar in the eternal temple of God! Revelation 3:12.

14. Purchase gold from God, white garments, and eyesalve to see. That is, the gold is a matter of suffering for the cause of God; white garments represent the righteousness of God that covers the nakedness of sins; and eyesalve is to see things with the improved vision and perspective of God—Revelation 3:18.

15. Be zealous and repent—Revelation 3:19.

16. Open the door of grace, and Christ will come in and live with you—Revelation 3:19.

17. Listen overcomers, you can sit on the throne with Christ- Revelation 3:21.

26-3: The Ascended Christ Completes the Bible.

It is important to see the giving of the book of Revelation to the Apostle John as the last work of the Ascended Christ in the completion of the Bible. (1) Jesus during His life on earth got the Apostle Matthew started on the Gospel and the New Testament with what He did and said; (2) After His Ascension Jesus appeared to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus and then in Saudi Arabia to give Paul the revelations for the writing of 14 books of the New Testament; and (3) Finally with this appearance to the Apostle John Jesus gives John the final revelation. Revelation 1:1-3 tells us—

1. God the Father Who on the First Day of Pentecost after the Ascension gave Jesus the Holy Spirit to send down on earth, now gives Jesus the Revelation to give to the Apostle John, lifting John up to heaven where Jesus is.

2. John is called a “bond-servant” and the Revelation is given through John to those also who are called “bond-servants”. This reminds us of Paul’s own epitaph in Colossians where he writes “Remember My Bonds”, implying (1) the bonds of imprisonment for them and for Christ; (2) the bonds of the Spirit of God, “Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives”; (3) the bonds of the Seven Ones, the major doctrines of the Bible

as One God, One Lord Jesus Christ, one Spirit, one body, etc.; and (4) The books or epistles of Paul that tell about these doctrines.

3. The means of transmission of this book of the Bible, the book of Revelation is not simple as an angel is also involved. It goes like this—

(1). God the Father originated the book of Revelation;

(2). The Father gave it to the Son even as He gave the Holy Spirit to the Son before given on earth; and

(3). The Son, The Ascended Christ, gave it to a messenger, and angel, for actual delivery to the Apostle John.

(4). The angel gave it to the Apostle John.

“...the things which must shortly take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John.” (Revelation 1:1b NASV)

Later this angel becomes very important as a fellowservant of the Apostle John—

“And I (the Apostle John) fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:10 KJV)

26-4: Worship God

You want a primary theme for the book of Revelation, here it is from the angel that actually delivered Revelation from God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ to the Apostle John, “WORSHIP GOD”. If you are truly worshipping God then you will not and can not be internally self-sufficient; if you are truly worshipping the God of the Bible, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of the Bible and the Creator of the Universe, then you will have less external doctrinal problems. How does this reconcile with the gist I have announced of “Seven Christian Thousands”. Well, you will have to read the whole book for that but I will give you a clue now from what God told Elijah when Elijah felt even as those few Christians and only seven churches in Asia Minor thought that they were all that was left of servants of God; and when I refer to that event of from God to Elijah I read it from Romans as quoted by the Apostle Paul to explain why most of the First Century Jews did not accept Christianity.

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. What ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according

to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more or works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.” (Romans 11:1-6 KJV)

Seven Christian Thousands, seven thousand for each generation represent the chosen people of God for each generation, a people that come independent of good works through the election of grace. Grace is grace and work is works, and the two are never to be confused in any generation; and although mankind has developed hundreds of ways to identify and number the people of God, God always reserves the right to number His own people. “Seven Christian Thousands” acknowledges that numbering by God Himself, and by the Grace of God!

26-5: Dominant Perspectives for the book of Revelation.

“...the things which must shortly take place...” (Revelation 1:1 NASV)

Allow most of what you can to be literal in the book of Revelation and you will not be so inclined as many others to go off into weird interpretations independent of the total context of the Bible. There is not one theology for the book of Revelation and another theology for the rest of the 66 books. While you can not allow the Dragon, etc. to be literal, you can much of the book of Revelation including the one thousand years and this statement above that most of Revelation will take place shortly and immediately. In fact, I know of only the following events to remain to be fulfilled in the book of Revelation: (1) The release of Satan from bondage after a thousand years of not being able to deceive whole nations which probably also took place somewhere between 1820- 1948; (2) Revelation of the Man of Perdition and the False Prophet; and (3) The Final Battle of Armageddon as Gog and Magog come against a camp of the saints in Jerusalem.

Everything else has to have an immediate message for the First Century Christians that are immediately undergoing persecution, who in their churches have already become self-sufficient as if they did not need the real Apostle, John, nor God nor His Ascended Christ and Holy Spirit; and who have developed most of the external and internal problems that we as individuals and churches face today! The message by and large for those First Century Christians is the same message for us today!

How We Identify the Author as the Apostle John? Well the book does that for us in the first and second verses of chapter 1. “...by His angel to His bond-servant John, who...” (Revelation 1:1,2 NASV)

1. John, “who bore witness to the word of God”.
2. John, “who bore witness to the testimony of Jesus Christ”.
3. John, “who bore witness to all that he saw”, what he saw during the “Revelation of Jesus Christ”.
4. The John that would write to the seven churches of Asia Minor, Revelation 1:4.

5. The John who is a brother and fellow participant with the Christians of the seven churches, Revelation 1:9.

6. The John that was on the isle of Patmos because of his testimony to Jesus and to the Word of God, Revelation 1:9.

7. The John who was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, Revelation 1:10.

8. The John who was chosen to write down what he saw then send it to the seven churches of Asia Minor, those seven churches specifically being named in Revelation 1:11.

First to Speak to John is the Ascended Christ

It is important to realize that while an angel was the primary messenger of the book of Revelation, that the first to speak to the Apostle John with "a loud voice like the sound of the trumpet" was the Ascended Christ—

"And when I saw Him, I fell at his feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, `Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'" (Revelation 1:17,18 KJV)

How Revelation 1:12-18 identifies the loud voice as the Ascended Christ—

1. One like a "son of man" clothed in a robe and girded with a golden girdle, Revelation 1:13.

2. One who stood in the midst of the seven golden lampstands which represented the seven churches, Revelation 1:12.

3. His head and hair were white like snow, and His eyes were like a flame of fire, Revelation 1:14.

4. His feet were like heated brass in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters, Revelation 1:15.

5. In His right hand were seven stars, the seven pastors of the seven churches; His face shined like the sun; and from His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, Revelation 1:16.

6. He identified Himself as the First and Last like God the Father of Revelation 1:8, Revelation 1:17.

7. He identified Himself as the living One, the One who was dead and now was alive forevermore, Revelation 1:18. That alone is enough to identify Him as the Ascended Christ!

8. He identified Himself as the one who has the keys to death and Hades, Revelation 1:18.

John gets Initial Instructions/Interpretations

"Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are

the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” (Revelation 1:19,20 NASV)

1. Write, John is to write a book of the Bible.

2. What this book will cover—

The things John has already seen, the vision of the Ascended Christ.

The things which are in the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, the subject of Revelation 2 and 3.

The future, the things that will take place after the vision of Christ and after the things that exist in the seven churches of Asia Minor.

3. Christ’s own assistance in the interpretation of the book of Revelation—

The seven stars are the seven angels of the churches. Yes, churches like little children have guardian angels! But what is really being spoken of here is the pastors. Yes, the pastors as messengers of God are called angels. Was that to keep the Romans and persecuting Jews from knowing the place the elders or pastors had in the sight of Christ. I don’t know, but it is quite awesome to think that your pastor is so revered in the sight of Christ to be called an angel. It hopefully, if appreciated, would prevent so many pastors from being run off from their churches; and even beyond that as a factor in the intolerance toward sound doctrine that is the trend in our contemporary churches, it might help in letting the pastor rule over the church. What is happening in most churches today--yes, particularly in Southern Baptist Churches--would have to be called “anarchy”. Like Jannes and Jambres and others among the children of Israel in the wilderness the people have rebelled against pastors, God, and Moses!

The seven lampstands are the seven churches. You know we should consider here if there is any relationship between the two lampstands and two olive trees of Revelation 11 and of the book of Zechariah (the two witnesses), and the seven lampstands of the seven churches. Surely this beginning of proper interpretation should relate to the whole book of Revelation and to what is the primary theme of the book of Revelation. The Ascended Christ wants John and John’s fellow Christians to see His power and Ascended capability as in the middle of the seven churches with the seven angels who have the power to preserve or reprimand those churches.

The Ascended Christ wants to identify with the God the Father that is to be worshipped! Jesus refers to Himself in the very same words that have come from God the Father in Revelation 1:8—**“I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Rev 1:8 NASV)**

26-6: Pride

Pride is by far nothing unique to the Mormons. It is only that they have made an official doctrine and practice out of pride, maintaining in their DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS that God blesses those who are good enough; and that is the ultimate in self-pride as it bespeaks of self

sufficiency and eliminates a need of the grace of God. (It is called by them THE REFORMED GOSPEL.) And I would by no means attempt to enhance the already well developed persecution complex of the Mormons. Also while it is highly questionable if the LDS should be even classified among Christians, the Mormons with their many churches and with their claim to be the only Church are the very personification of the first three chapters of Revelation in that they have a name, a reputation, but they are dead. That in adopting the other three Bibles, in adopting the false concept of a Prophet who speaks revelations to be respected beyond that of the Bible and their other three Bibles, in the false concept of a Restored Gospel that modifies and replaces the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the false and self-disillusionment that they only are the Latter Day Saints, with the reality that it is difficult for any real Saint to remain among them, they are showing the ultimate in pride: a pride that leads away from the acknowledgment of the God of the Bible, the real God; and that leads away from salvation through the only real Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet they are only an ultimate example of pride as was the church which had a reputation for being alive but was dead. We also have individual pride and church pride. A pride that can give us the same appearance of religion in good attendance, many meetings, a wonderful sounding choir and musical program, evidence of good works, an emphasis on the family, and even an appearance of evangelism in the name of Christ; but be for nought except as a matter of self-justification and a matter of bragging before other men about our exclusive religion. If we learn nothing else from the follies of the Mormons we must learn that good music, dynamic speakers, attendance and meetings, an appearance of evangelism, and family life with an appearance of good works will not get it done! You see, okay what is left that is not covered by those things; and what can we do that they are not doing already. The answer is simple: (1) Worship the true God, the God of the Universe and the God of the Bible, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Daily live in the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ; and (3) Find your salvation only in the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible, the Son of the God of Creation and the Bible.

Organization

I'm afraid God may have withdrawn from Southern Baptists because of the warfare between the moderates and the fundamentalists. Open warfare as it exists now in the Southern Baptist Convention can not co-exist with love so that it becomes evident that Southern Baptists like the church at Laodicea has left its first love. And so has gone every denomination of Christianity as evidenced in the History of Christianity as the organization itself becomes paramount over anything else. While many verbal disguises have been used during the last decade of warfare between the moderates and fundamentalists, it has primarily been a political warfare for the control of the organizations of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Organization is most often a substitute for enthusiasm; and if we stop to think about it, which do you think the Holy Spirit can most easily work through, organization or enthusiasm? The answer is self-evident! How quickly a church or a convention of churches can depart from its beginnings in first love. This is evidenced by what happened at Ephesus, the single church of the seven of the book of Revelation that we know a great deal about. Acts 19 records the beginnings of the church at Ephesus under the ministry of the Apostle Paul, a ministry which saw the Gospel preached in all of Asia—

“And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 19:10 KJV)

We learn what is going to happen almost immediately in the future of this fervent and evangelistic church of Ephesus by what Paul tells the elders at Miletus—

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29,30 KJV)

And we know from Revelation 2 this is what really did happen in Ephesus—

“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Revelation 2:2-5 KJV)

Considering that the church at Ephesus was organized in approximately 54 A.D. and when this indictment against them was written it was approximately 94 A.D., a period of only 40 years to go from the fervor of evangelism to the decadence of organization, to go from first love to secondary pursuits; then do you think it strange that with a history of from 1861 to 1991, or 130 years, more than three times that of the almost fall of Ephesus, that the SBC in 130 years could repeat both the history of other denominations and of the church at Ephesus.

26-7: Seven Christian Thousand.

If in this generation there are only seven thousand people of God as in the time of Elijah, I don’t think we should look for too many of those people among the Southern Baptists or among the Mormons!

Some Exegesis Points of Revelation 1-3.

1:1 The connection of revelation, secrets, and the book of Daniel as an introduction to the prophecy of the book of Revelation—in particular Daniel 2:28-30—is evident. While the Mormons in their Temple worship are in the secrets keeping business, God and his true

Prophets and prophets are in the secret revealing business. During this study we will find an inevitable connection between the spirit of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus; and Jesus early in His ministry to the apostles and other Christians made it clear that what is entrusted by way of revelations is to be shouted from the housetops, not keep in secret.

1:7 This quote or RevRecon from Daniel 7:13,14, makes it clear that the wicked dead will also see Christ at His Second Coming. Also in the evident RevRecon nature of Zechariah 12:10 and the words of “even those who pierced him”, we see the double or beyond nature of prophecy in that Zechariah 12:10 is first of all clearly a reference to the Crucifixion of Jesus still to come with the subsequent outpouring of the Spirit and grace to follow; but by the use of those same words here in Revelation, we see that it also applies to the Second Coming. And it is not so much a double nature as a fuller nature that covers much more spread of time that in those terms of which we normally think. Even Joel’s prophecy that Peter quoted on the first day of Pentecost as beginning to be fulfilled with what was happening that day, the beginning of the last days, also including the great and notable last One Day of the Lord when the old heavens and earth would pass away. And the whosoever would call upon the name of the Lord applied at the beginning or near the end of the Last Days.

1:8 This LORD God the Father of the book of Revelation was no new God in the Bible; for like here identified as “Alpha and Omega” was so identified as the God of the Prophets in Isaiah 41:4: “I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.” (KJV)

1:9-20 Even as God’s pattern as part of the tabernacle construction of Exodus 13:31-40 was the golden candlestick of seven lamps, so John sees seven golden lampstands which represent the seven churches and the seven stars represent the seven angels of the churches. (We find angels to be more than angels in the book of Revelation.)

2:1 Immediately you know “angel” not to be an angel in the conventional sense of the rest of the Bible, because there would be no need for Jesus to write to an angel. The angels are right there in heaven with Him, and can be spoken to directly. Therefore, the angel is really the pastor or leader of the local church. Angel in the book of Revelation has more the meaning of “messenger of God”; and what we will find is that this is a small key to the unlocking of the mysteries of Revelation. It is these angels, fellow servants, brethren, and holders of the testimony of Jesus and of the Word of God that also have the spirit of prophecy. How then can we distinguish between an angel with the power of an angel and an angel in the making still on earth? In the context of the verse and chapter!

2:4 The church at Ephesus was not the first assembly of God to leave its first love as we find in Jeremiah 2; and this background helps us understand exactly what the leaving of the first love at Ephesus was—

“Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit....For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:11,13 KJV)

To leave the first love is to depart in concept and conscience from the God of the Bible, the God of salvation. It entails two evils: (1) Forsaken the God of the living water of salvation and His Son; and (2) Making other gods that can not provide this living water. Hence the last invitation of the book of Revelation to Ephesus, to the other churches of Asia Minor, and to all Christians and churches is to “Come” to the living water and drink (Rev 22:17).

2:7 Since another chapter of this book, SEVEN CHRISTIAN THOUSANDS, is on the “overcomers”, and the overcomers are mentioned here, it should also be pointed out how that the promise here of eating from the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God is the subject also of Revelation 22 where with the new heavens and earth comes a new Jerusalem with the Tree of life in its midst. When God after the expulsion of man made it impossible for anyone to find the Garden of Eden and the tree of life, we must decide that He pulled it up into heaven approximately 1500 miles from which it will be lowered with the Tree of Life when the new city with its Garden is lowered. There were also “overcomers” in the book of Proverbs, Proverbs 11:30,31—

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.” (Proverbs 11:30,31 KJV)

The “overcomers” are identified as: (1) The righteous and this is consistent with the final admonition of Revelation 22:11 where the righteous and holy are to keep on being righteous and holy; (2) Those who win souls by the testimony of Jesus and by the Word of God, a consistent and repeating theme in the book of Revelation; and (3) As the opposite of the wicked sinner where also in Revelation 22:11 it is admonished to let the filthy and liar keep on being filthy and a liar.

2:14 The teachings of Baalim are not new to the book of Revelation and to the church at Pergamos. Besides the original teachings of the Baalim of the Old Testament (Numbers 22), the Apostle Peter wrote earlier of this problem in II Peter 2, starting the discussion in 2:1 in terms of “false teachers” and then climaxing in 2:15,16 with about loving the wages of unrighteousness. From II Peter 2 then the teachings of Baalim would include: (1) Those teachers who bring damnable heresies among the people that serve to deny the atonement of Christ (2:1); (2) Those who follow their own fickle way bringing an evil reputation on the way of Truth (2:2); (3) With fake words and out of a covetous heart they make merchandise of Christians, or profit from Christians (2:3); (4) They that walk in the flesh with uncleanness, despise government,

are presumptuous, self-willed, and speak evil of higher-ups (2:10); (5) Speak evil of those things which they do not understand (2:12); (6) Spots and blemishes among Christians with deceptions that they parade before Christians (2:13); (7) With eyes full of adultery, hearts full of sin, unstable souls (2:14); (8) Wells without water, drifting clouds, and recipients of the darkness (2:17); and (9) Speakers of great swelling words of vanity that led those previously escaped from such back into the lusts of the flesh (2:18). (NOTE: A study of these teachers and teachings of Balaam of II Peter, Revelation, and the book of Jude as well as certain correlating passages from Paul could be considered a study of much of the Mormons and Mormonism. Baalim as Satan always has his followers. The teachings and practices are the same only the name is changed to protect the guilty!)

3:9 While we may be somewhat fearful of labeling a spade as a spade and the Mormons as under the leadership of Satan, the book of Revelation does not hesitate to call the Jews at Philadelphia “the synagogue of Satan”. Now, that is intolerant and religious persecution; but true.

James 2:17,18: Neither Faith Nor Works Alone

Mormons and Baptists stand at the two extremes of the faith-works spectrum with Mormons placing an overemphasis on works for salvation without faith and Baptist placing an overemphasis on faith for salvation without works. “EVEN SO FAITH, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS IS DEAD, BEING ALONE.” (James 2:17 KJV) And the opposite would also be true: EVEN SO WORKS, IF IT HATH NOT FAITH IS DEAD, BEING ALONE. The primary point of James and the rest of the Bible is that faith and works go inseparable together. While Baptists need primarily the message of James, the Mormons need primarily the message of the book of Galatians. Both beliefs are intolerant of sound doctrine.

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4 KJV)

Hear that Mormons! You may call yourself the “Church of Jesus Christ”, but that name is “of no effect” for you and your salvation as you simultaneously seek to be “justified by the (works) of the law”. You have fallen away from the grace of God by which only there is salvation.

26-8: Works, Faith, and Grace.

When you look at the total number of times these three words—works, faith, and grace—are mentioned in the New Testament, there is absolutely no doubt which is the most important subject: the word “works” is found 118 times, the word “faith” 245 times, and the word “grace” 131 times. It is almost as if God in the writing of His New Testament through the Spirit and Apostles is saying I will balance works and grace, respectively 118 and 131 times; and then I will deal with the primary subject of the Bible which is faith. And if you add the word “believe” which is the verb form of the word “faith”, you find a combined total in the New Testament of 369 times.

In short, what the Mormons have had to do in order to make effectively their own King James Version of the Bible that is consistent with their other four or more Bibles is to take approximately 118/618, or 19%. Baptists have done a little bit better in taking approximately 81% of the Bible. However that is only officially. In fact and unfortunately, both Mormons and Baptists have effectively through indifference and ignorance taken only a little of the Bible for all practical purposes, having created a religion of the world through the exercise of their own conscience rather than an objective Bible exercise.

At the end of the chapter in tabular form is a comparison of the New Testament on the four words “works”, “faith”, “believe”, “faith and believe”, and “grace”. From these numbers, indications of the way God wrote the New Testament, you have no doubt that the book of Revelation is the book of WORKS, having the largest number of usages of the word “works” in the New Testament, 17; and the only other New Testament book close to that in usage of “works” is the Gospel of John written immediately after Revelation. The way the Apostle John compensated, or rather the Spirit of God through John, in order to make the Gospel of John more a book of faith and believe was to use believe an even greater number of times!

The books that are more on “works” than “faith” and “grace”; or WORKS > FAITH AND GRACE books—

1. Revelation.

Wow, the book of Revelation stands alone here; because even the book of James of which we normally think of as a book of “works”, there is a balance between works and faith and grace, respectively 10, 12, and 2. While you were thinking of so many other characteristics of the book of Revelations such as eschatalogy, etc. surely you overlooked the fact that the book of Revelation is the paramount book of all the Bible on the subject of works as compared to faith and grace. You notice that “faith” plus “believe” are only mentioned 4 times and grace only twice!

The books that are approximately balanced on “works” and “faith” and “grace”; or WORKS = FAITH AND GRACE—

1. Matthew with 12 and 12 respectively on works and faith.
2. James with 10 and 12 respectively on works and faith.

NOTE: When James emphasizes that faith and works stand together, he is practicing what he teaches in the writing of his book.

3. Titus with 6 on works, 5 on faith and believe, and 4 on grace, perhaps the most balanced on the three subjects in the New Testament.

AND OF COURSE WHAT THAT LEAVES IS THAT THE REST OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE MORE ON FAITH-BELIEVE AND GRACE THAN ON WORKS—FAITH

BELIEVE PLUS GRACE > WORKS—OR THE REMAINING 23 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

“Works” in Revelation

With this in mind, we definitely should take a closer look at what the “works” references tell us in Revelation, noting that while the Mormons are farther away from the rest of the Bible than Baptists, we must check to see that with their works are they closer to the truth in the book of Revelation than are Baptists?

1. Revelation 2:2.

“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars...” (Rev 2:2 KJV)

While we tend to think of Mormons as emphasizing works over Baptists, here we find that the Baptists fare much better than the Mormons in good works as the Baptists have had far less tolerance with those who falsely claim to be Apostles than have the Mormons!

2. Revelation 2:5.

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and, repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly; and will remove thy candlestick out of his place; except thou repent.” (Rev 2:5 KJV)

It is amazing in these words from the Ascended Christ Himself in that the “fallen” sounds much like Galatians 5:4 although it is primarily on grace! And ultimately we must find that a failure to do the first works is the equivalent of the attempt to be justified by the works of the law! To fall or fail is to do the works of the law rather than the works of faith and grace!

3. Revelation 2:9.

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” (Rev 2:9 KJV)

Well, we know where the works of blasphemy and of Satan are in our American society! Well, at least some of them; and it should be refreshing to pick on somebody other than the Mormons. I have reminded you that the Mormons are only the best example of the bad aspects of the falling away. Let me parenthetically remind you that the gap between churchmembership and Christ today is in all churches and all denominations!

4. Revelation 2:13.

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” (Rev 2:13 KJV)

Satan was declared to be there because that was where faithful Christians were being slain! Notice also that it is not enough simply to name the name of Christ—"holdest fast my name": it is also necessary to "hast not denied my faith"

5. Revelation 2:19.

"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." (Rev 2:19 KJV)

Is the Ascended Christ saying that the last works of the church at Thyatira are greater than the first works; or do we have two different words for "works" in this one verse? We are assisted by the translation of the NASV:

"I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first." (Rev 2:19 NASV)

6. Revelation 2:23.

"And I will kill her children (the children of the prophetess Jezebel) with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Rev 2:23 KJV)

God gives to each church and each individual in the churches according to their individual works.

7. Revelation 2:14.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations..." (Rev 2:14 KJV)

We think of Paul's "always abounding in the work of the Lord", which is never in vain. The end will be at the end of the falling away, and then the Second Coming of Christ with the catching up of believers to meet Him in the air. Those that fall away during the great falling away do not work until the end: they have turned away from the truth of all sound doctrine including the works of Jesus.

8. Revelation 3:1,2

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God." (Rev 3:1,2 KJV)

The works of any church can be such that in the community and American society they are a good name or reputation, and yet such that in the sight of God that reputation is nothing; that is, those works are nothing. Dead surely would be the equivalent of fallen, of justification by law or dead works, and of Christ being of none effect!

9. Revelation 3:8.

“I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, hadst not denied my name.” (Rev 3:8 KJV)

We are beginning to realize that “works”, at least in Revelation, has more meaning than works as in work; for what are the works that the Ascended Christ knows here?

(1). That they have a little strength which means grace and the power of grace since the power, grace, and strength of a church even as an individual comes from the grace of the Spirit of God.

(2). That they keep the Word of Christ.

(3). That they have not denied the name of Christ.

So that while perhaps two out of three are works in the sense of what we normally think of works, at least one third is grace!

10. Revelation 3:15.

“I know works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot.” (Rev 3:15 KJV)

We see that works are more the characteristics of the churches. What they are doing and what they are saying and what they are believing and how they are loving and serving!

11. Revelation 9:20.

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” (Rev 9:20 KJV)

Well, it is obvious that most of these works are exactly what we think of as evil works which violate the laws of God: of murder, fornication, and stealing; and only the first is a different yet somewhat similar work in that is the worship of devils instead of the worship of God. Of course, again we remember that the first commandments are laws of the worship of God.

12. Revelation 14:13.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” (Rev 14:13 KJV)

What are the characteristics of the true saints, those who “die in the Lord”? That: (1) They rest from doing works; and (2) That their works or labors follow them to the new life. So that works being the opposite of rest is what we ordinarily think of in terms of works!

13. Revelation 15:3.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” (Rev 15:3 KJV)

The “works” of God give us a clue as to what the works of men and of churches are to be: (1) The works of God are marvelous and great; and (2) The works of God are just and true. AND ONLY THIS GOD OF THE BIBLE, THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, IS THE KING OF SAINTS!

14. Revelation 18:6.

“Reward her eyes as she rewarded you, and double unto her (Babylon or the New Babylon, Rome) double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.” (Rev 18:6 KJV)

The deeds of Rome, and of any subsequent generation, as they persecuted Christians will return to them double for what they have done!

15. Revelation 20:12,13.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12,13 KJV)

There is a set of books by which works are to be judged; and then there is one book, the book of life, which is the book that list all those who by grace and faith have been in the Lord, that once listed in that book the books of works have nothing to do with them. It is only that in the churches of all kinds there are many individuals who must be judged according to works, because they have never experienced the faith and grace that comes from God! You will find from the last chapter study, that when Christ tells the church at Sardis that there are “only a few who have not defiled their garments”, they tells us how sad it can get among churchmembers in any given church.

Let us be frank or honest: how pastors, other church and denomination leaders have done during the “perilous times” of II Timonty 3:1-9 and the {**falling away**} “time” of II Timothy 4:1-4, is to redefine works, illustrated as following: “the men will be lovers of themselves” is redefined by leaders as acceptable self-fulfillment; the lovers of money is made a goal for all Christians and a sign of the blessing of God; the boasters are promoted to positions of leadership since they have all the answers anyway; the proud, ah yes pride, the subject of this chapter--well, the proud become the inheritors of the Fallen churches while the poor in spirit inherit the rest of the earth; the blasphemers are allowed to remain anonymous as long as they take the name of God in vain only at work, home, and play; the disobedient to the Bible teachings

of their parents are excused in terms of the natural evolution of a new generation, the necessity to be “cool” and keep up with the times; the unthankful are allowed to cry their poison out to the whole congregation as self-expression; the unholy--well, the unholy, how can we know the difference without sound doctrine; the unloving, well if we go by the appearance of things instead of the reality, and we say “love, love, love”, or Touched by Love, then it must be so; the unforgiving are allowed to vent their anger in the spirit of the fundamentalists; the slanderers are placed in charge of weeding out the moderates and liberals in the Southern Baptist Convention; those without self-control are allowed freedom of expression and dominance in the anarchy in church government; the brutal appear as defenders of the faith; the despisers of

works	faith	believe	faith/believe	grace	New Testament books
12	12	7	19	0	1. Matthew
9	31	2	33	7	2. Hebrews
8	34	8	42	20	3. Romans
10	12	1	13	2	4. James
0	12	6	18	6	5. I,II Thessalonians
1	13	6	18	19	6. I,II Corinthians
5	20	1	21	7	7. Galatians
2	7	1	8	10	8. I,II Peter
6	5	0	5	4	9. Titus
4	18	3	21	3	10. I Timothy
3	8	1	9	12	11. Ephesians
3	8	1	9	4	13. II Timothy
0	4	1	5	3	14. Philippians

good subvert the concepts of right, wrong, and doctrine; the traitors ignore Baptist and Bible sound doctrine; the headstrong charge on conquering for the benefit of the Falling Away; the haughty support them; the lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God dominant the democratic process; and the form of godliness that denies the power of God becomes the norm for church membership; more new teachers are heaped up to send them into homes where they can make captive more silly women laden with sins; those that will not endure sound doctrine are provided alternative convictions; that their new doctrines are based more on their desires is alleviated by the pastor as creative expressions; the itching ears are tickled each time the church comes together; the heaping up of unsound teachers is promoted and the heaping out of sound teachers becomes a regular practice; and finally there is no absolute truth, only fables.