



Christian Apostasy

Irenaeus lived approximately 130 a.d. to 202 a.d. The exact dates of his life are not known. Nor is the exact date he wrote his greatest work, a five-book series titled *Against Heresies*. His outline of heretical teachings is known to have been composed late in the second century. Until the discovery of the gnostic gospels at Nag Hammadi in 1945, it was from *Against Heresies* that most information about the gnostics was learned.

Irenaeus provides us a glimpse into the state of Christianity less than a century after the death of the apostles. What is revealed through that glimpse, is a bizarre bunch of conflicting views. Many of the teachings he condemned are so alien to today's Christians that we would regard them as perverse aberrations. Yet they competed in the early Christian market place for converts, and claimed to be a true reflection of Christ's teachings.

Christ foretold there would be "children of the wicked one" who would be planted among His "wheat" while they both grew together. (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.) The apostle Paul was astonished at how quickly the church at Galatia was corrupted with perverse teachings. (Gal. 1:6-7.) He predicted the entire falling away (apostasy) of the Christian church. (2 Thes. 2-3.)

While the apostles were alive and preaching, Christians divided themselves into contentious factions. Some followed one teacher, others another, and they emphasized their disagreements rather than their common beliefs. (1 Cor. 1:11-13.) "Ministers of Satan" were actively teaching inside the earliest bodies of Christians. (2 Cor. 11:13-15.) Paul lamented that "all of Asia" had fallen into error and rejected his teaching. (2 Tim. 1:15.) John warned of false spirits and false apostles who were spreading falsehoods that misrepresented Christ. (1 John 4:1-2.) By Nicaea, 324 a.d., the denial of Christ coming into the flesh was so widely accepted that a newly adopted and false teaching of the "Trinity" completed the overthrow of true doctrine regarding Christ who lived as a man in the flesh among us.

Even if falsehoods supplanted Christianity, John's vision foretells that God's patience will finally come to an end and the religions that worship devils, and gold, and silver and idols will be destroyed.

(Rev. 9:20.)

If Christians were to examine the history of Mormonism, they would better understand how unclean spirits and false prophets overtook Christianity. (Rev. 16:13; also 2 Tim. 11:13-15.) Joseph Smith began Mormonism under the influence of one spirit, but upon his death, Brigham Young followed under the influence of another.

As a true shepherd would, Joseph gave his life for the sheep. (John 10:11.) Brigham Young declared he would flee and never surrender his life, a sign of a false shepherd. (John 10:12-13.) He proclaimed he was unwilling to lay down his life as Joseph did:

“But woe, woe to that man who comes here to unlawfully interfere with my affairs. Woe, woe to those men who come here to unlawfully meddle with me and this people. I swore in Nauvoo, when my enemies were looking me in the face, that I would send them to hell across lots, if they meddle with me; and I ask no more odds of hell to-day.” (July 26, 1857.)

“A mob killed Joseph and Hyrum in jail, notwithstanding the faith of the State was pledged to protect them... I have broken no law, and under the present state of affairs, I will not suffer myself to be taken by any United States officer, to be killed as they killed Joseph.” (August 12, 1857.)

“Do you expect to stand still, sit still, or lie still, and untimely let them take away my life? I have told you a great many times what I have to say about that. I do not profess to be so good a man as Joseph Smith was. I do not walk under their protection nor into their prisons, as he did.” (August 9, 1857.)

Brigham Young advocated controlling people by holding economic power over them. He explained how he envisioned keeping people in line and subordinate to him by getting them to consecrate their property to the church he led:

“If any man is in darkness through the deceitfulness of riches, it is good policy for him to bind up his wealth in this Church, so that he cannot command it again, and he will be apt to cleave to the kingdom. If a man has the purse in his pocket, and he apostatizes, he takes it with him; but if his worldly interest is firmly united to the Kingdom of God, when he arises to go away, he finds the calf is bound, and, like the cow, he is unwilling to forsake it.” (April 6, 1852.)

Brigham Young defied the US Government when its representatives were critical of his authoritarian rule in the Territory of Utah:

“What says the United States? ‘Let us send a governor there; let us send our judges there.’ But what do they cry? ‘We have no influence or power, for there are other men there who rule, and we cannot help it; they have the reins of government and turn the people whithersoever they will, and we cannot help ourselves.’ What did a gentleman say to [US President] Mr. Fillmore? Said he, ‘You need not send anybody there, for Brigham Young is Governor, and he will govern the people all the time; and there is no other man that can govern them.’ If there is any truth in this, it is, he will do so as long as the Lord lets him.” (October 3, 1852.)

On June 9, 1853, he threatened to kill any apostates or non-believers who opposed him in a public discourse. Beginning in 1855, God’s wrath at Brigham Young and his followers became evident in a series of natural disasters that caused famine and severe hardships. In response to these afflictions, Young increased his threatening and began a bloody period known as the Mormon Reformation. The Mountain Meadows Massacre was as a result, at least in part, by the fiery rhetoric Brigham Young preached during the Mormon Reformation.

Like the early Christians who were overcome by deceiving spirits, (Mark 13:5-6; 2 Tim. 3:13; 1 Cor. 15:33-34; Eph. 5:5-6) Mormonism was overcome by the lusts, appetites and ambitions of Young, who was animated by a very different spirit than Joseph Smith. The result of leading by that spirit is aptly described in the Book of Mormon:

“For the time speedily shall come that all churches which are built up to get gain, and all those who are built up to get power over the flesh, and those who are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and those who seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity; yea, in fine, all those who belong to the kingdom of the devil are they who need fear, and tremble, and quake; they are those who must be brought low in the dust; they are those who must be consumed as stubble; and this is according to the words of the prophet.” (1 Ne. 22:23.)

LDS Mormonism not only has been built up to get gain, but is a a multibillion dollar empire, able to undertake a trillion-dollar development for housing, and employing a population of 500,000 people in Florida on 133,000 acres. The LDS church is only partly religious, and has built a \$2 to \$5 billion dollar shopping mall-condominium housing-office complex across the street from its Salt Lake City temple. (The total cost depends on whether the retail establishment alone or the entire project is valued.) The LDS corporate church is now completing a similarly ambitious project in downtown Philadelphia adjacent to the temple it completed in September 2016.

Millions of faithful Mormons are entirely oblivious to the dramatic gulf between the scriptures,

revelations and teachings of the founder Joseph Smith, and the replacement religion created through Brigham Young. That transition mirrors what happened to early Christianity. By the time only one Christian orthodox faith survived, it was also making merchandise of men's souls. The description of Babylon the Great whore in John's revelation accurately describes both the false Christian religious empire founded in Rome in the fourth century and the false Mormon empire founded by Brigham Young in the late 1840s:

“The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.” (Rev. 18:12-13.)

Christianity did not survive the second century. Mormonism did not survive its third decade. The answer to the question 'why' is the same: Both became more interested in getting economic gain, power over the flesh, becoming popular in the eyes of the world, and infatuated by the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, than in practicing and preserving the faith taught by Christ. The Book of Mormon describes the corrupting influences infecting churches.

Christ's religion requires sacrifice. Its reward is later, after this world. In this world, if we practice the faith taught by Christ, “we are of all men most miserable.” (1 Cor. 15:19.)

How can we support with our donations the false ministers who preach for hire and neglect the poor among us? How can we assume we will be saved by the smooth things we hear from our hireling priests? (Isa. 30:10.) How would we even recognize the truth after being taught lies pretending to define what it means to be “Christian”?

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