

## But They Believe in Jesus — Don't They?

*Is it possible to believe in 'Jesus' and still be lost? Yes—if you believe in a counterfeit Jesus, and a counterfeit gospel, which is 'no gospel at all!'*

The Galatians of Paul's day claimed to believe in Jesus. And so did the Corinthians. But the Apostle Paul said different. Consider what he had to say to the church at Corinth.

<sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. <sup>4</sup> For if someone comes to you and preaches a *Jesus other than the Jesus we preached*, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a *different gospel from the one you accepted*, let him be eternally condemned! (2 Cor. 11:3–4)

And to the churches of Galatia,

<sup>6</sup> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a *different gospel* — <sup>7</sup> *which is really no gospel at all*. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! <sup>9</sup> As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Gal. 1:3–9)

Paul tells the Corinthians that they have come to believe in *another* Jesus — not the one he had preached to them. As a result, he says they have come to place their confidence in a gospel which was quite different from the one they had originally accepted. And as he tells the Galatians, this different gospel — *is really no gospel at all!*

How can this be? Isn't there really only one Jesus? And one gospel? Yes, there is only one *real* Jesus. The Jesus portrayed in the Bible. And there is only one *real* gospel. The one clearly spelled out by Jesus and the authors of the New Testament — in the *real* Bible.

But the Corinthians had 'deserted' the real Jesus — in favour of a counterfeit promoted by outsiders (misguided Jews) who required these Believers become subordinate to the Mosaic Law of the Old Covenant, which had been made obsolete by the cross (Heb. 8:13). This distortion gutted the real gospel of its saving power, making it a *different* gospel, which was *no gospel at all!* Pretty serious stuff, don't you think? These are really matters of spiritual life and death. So we need to pay attention.

Paul says 'I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is *the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes*' (Rom. 1:16). But when the gospel is distorted through false teaching, it loses its power to save — it becomes *no gospel at all*. This is why false teaching is so deadly, it guts the gospel of its saving power. Instead, people place false confidence in a false gospel with false assurance of a false salvation. It simply does not get any deadlier than that!

Make no mistake about it — Joseph Smith was far more misguided than the Jews who had corrupted the churches of Galatia and Corinth with their false teaching. His

counterfeit scriptures portray a counterfeit Jesus and a counterfeit gospel, which is no gospel at all. And as his followers rely on him, they also place false confidence in a false gospel with false assurance of a false salvation. Even worse, it actually makes them *resistant* to the real gospel. Bible scholar F.F. Bruce describes it this way.

People are frequently immunized against a disease by being inoculated with a mild form of it, or with a related but milder disease. And in the spiritual realm experience suggests that it is possible to be 'immunized' against Christianity by being inoculated with something which, for the time being, looks so like the real thing that it is generally mistaken for it. (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 144.)

So it is for followers of Joseph Smith. They believe they already have the truth. And along as they feel that way, it is impossible for them to hear — and respond — to the real gospel. They only open themselves to the real gospel once their faith in Joseph Smith is shaken, or destroyed altogether. And so that is a central part of our ministry. To those who are willing to hear, it is quite easy to demonstrate the grave errors of Joseph Smith and his counterfeit scriptures and gospel. We then focus their attention squarely on the real Jesus. We drill into them this central, Biblical truth.

Jesus + Anything Else = Nothing

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This is Paul's message to the Corinthians and the Galatians. Our ministry to Latter Day Saints is the same as the Apostle Paul's. We endeavour to destroy false teaching in favor of the real Jesus, and the real gospel of the real Bible. The result is genuine salvation and a living, growing relationship with the real Jesus. 🌟

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