

Answering The Religious Errors Of Our Family, Friends, and Neighbors 1

“Baptized For The Dead!”

Lesson 14

INTRO:

- A. The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-day Saints (a.k.a. the Mormons) teach and practice “baptism for the dead”.
1. In supposed ‘proof’ of this belief and practice, they quote **1 Corinthians 15:29** *“Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”*
- B. “Jesus Christ taught that baptism is essential to the salvation of all who have lived on earth (see John 3:5). Many people, however, have died without being baptized. Others were baptized without proper authority. Because God is merciful, He has prepared a way for all people to receive the blessings of baptism. By performing proxy baptisms in behalf of those who have died, Church members offer these blessings to deceased ancestors. Individuals can then choose to accept or reject what has been done in their behalf.... Some people have misunderstood that when baptisms for the dead are performed, deceased persons are baptized into the Church against their will. This is not the case. Each individual has agency, or the right to choose. The validity of a baptism for the dead depends on the deceased person accepting it and choosing to accept and follow the Savior while residing in the spirit world. The names of deceased persons are not added to the membership records of the Church.
- The New Testament indicates that baptisms for the dead were done during the time of the Apostle Paul (see 1 Corinthians 15:29). This ordinance was restored with the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”
- (www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics)**
1. This explains why the Mormons have one of the largest, if not the largest, genealogical archives in the world!
- C. What’s really interesting is their use of the Bible in an effort to prove their practice but they make no appeal to their own **The Book Of Mormon!**
1. **The Book Of Mormon** never mentions the practice!
 2. It is believed that Joseph Smith instituted the practice in 1840 in response to concerns among his followers about those relatives who had died without being baptized.

I. WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH CONCERNING 1 CORINTHIANS

15:29? “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”

- A. Let us not forget the basic rules in understand the Scriptures or any other form of communication, whether written or spoken.
1. Always keep verses in their context. That means taking into consideration the surrounding verses, chapters, and maybe even the entire book.
 - a. For example, what is the subject under consideration?

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2. Don't come to a conclusion on one verse that contradicts another verse.
- B. The context of **1 Corinthians 15** begins in **verse 12** - *“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”*
 1. From **verse 12** and continuing to **verse 34**, Paul discusses the consequences of those who were teaching there is no resurrection.
 - a. Some of the consequences of no resurrection:
 - 1) *“Christ is not risen.” v. 13*
 - 2) *“preaching is empty” v. 14*
 - 3) *“your faith is also empty.” v. 14*
 - 4) *“we (apostles) are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.” v15*
 - 5) *“For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.” v. 16*
 - 6) *“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” v. 17*
 - 7) *“Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” v.18*
 - 8) *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” v. 19*
 2. **Verses 20-28** Paul explains the positive benefits of the fact of Christ's resurrection.
 - a. Still referring to the resurrection, Paul says in **verse 26**, *“The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”*
 - b. *“Death”, the “last enemy”* will be destroyed when there is the resurrection Jesus spoke of in **John 5:28-29** *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”*
 - 1) When that *“hour”* comes and *“all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth”*, death will be destroyed.
 - 2) Death will be destroyed when all the dead are resurrected.
 3. If Christ is not raised, then baptism is of no value.
 - a. **Romans 6:3-5** *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ** Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as **Christ was raised from***

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*the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 **For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,***

- 1) What value would there be in being **“baptized into Christ”** if Christ is not risen and there is no resurrection?
- 2) If Christ has not risen and there is no resurrection, we are being baptized for the dead; namely Christ.
- b. That is the **STATEMENT** Paul is making in **verse 29** by putting it in the form of a **QUESTION** - *“...Why then are they baptized for the dead?”*
 - 1) The answer is too obvious to miss!
 - 2) It’s similar to the questions Jesus asked in **Matthew 16:26** *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
 - a) They are questions but the answers are obvious and understood!!
- C. To teach a person can be baptized for their ancestors is to contradict other verses found in the Scriptures.
 1. Salvation is a personal and individual matter; not something that can be done proxy by someone else.
 - a. **Acts 2:37** *“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **WHAT SHALL WE DO?**”*
 - b. **Acts 2:40** *“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, **SAVE YOURSELVES** from this untoward generation.”*
 - c. **Acts 16:30** *“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, **WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?**”*
 - d. **Philippines 2:12** *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION** with fear and trembling.”*
 - 1) There is no example of anyone being baptized for anyone else other than themselves!
 2. Another matter that is contradicted by the practice of being baptized for the dead is a person’s final destiny.
 - a. The Scriptures teach when we die our eternal destiny is sealed/fixed/set.
 - 1) There is no changing to be made in regards to the eternal destinies of those who are dead.

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- b. Jesus’ telling about the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16:19-31** shows this to be the case with the dead.

- 1) Note **verse 26** “*And beside all this, **between us and you there is a great gulf fixed**: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*”

CONCLUSION:

- A. It is so important to examine what a verse is saying in it’s context **AND** make sure the conclusions we draw do not contradict other passages of Scripture.
- B. May studying this subject help us to see how important it is that we are “... *rightly dividing the word of truth*”. (**2 Timothy 2:15**)

Question:

1. Paul addresses many problems which were taking place in the church at Corinth. What is the problem being dealt with in 1 Corinthians 15?

Answer:

2. What did Jesus say about baptism?

Answer:
