

Roman Catholics, Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses

By Mike Gendron

When we study the doctrines of Roman Catholicism, Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses we discover that they have more in common with each another than with the Bible. Each religion exalts the name of Jesus Christ and claims to be Bible-based, yet each one has perverted “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 4). All three preach “another Jesus” and “another gospel” under the “supernatural authority” of man’s teachings and traditions. All three teach salvation is based on what man does for God rather than believing what God has already done for man through Jesus Christ. Each religion demands total, blind and unquestionable submission to the authority of men who claim to have special extra-biblical knowledge from God. Each religion employs manipulation, indoctrination, deception and mandatory rituals to control its members and keep them enslaved to the system. Tragically there are many sincere and zealous people in each religion, who believe they are serving the true God, but are destined for a Christ-less eternity. Let us examine eight similarities among these three religions (the numbers in parenthesis denote paragraphs from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

1. Preach Another Jesus

The “Mormon Jesus” was the first spirit-child born to the Heavenly Father and Mother and is the half-brother of Satan. The “Jehovah’s Witness Jesus” was the incarnation of Michael the Archangel. The “Catholic Jesus” is unable to save sinners completely and forever and returns to the earth daily, under the appearance of a wafer, to be worshipped and re-presented as a sacrificial victim for the propitiation of God’s wrath (1367; 1374-78; 1405; 1414).

2. Baptism Necessary for Salvation

All three faiths require baptism into their respective religions for the fullness of salvation. Roman Catholicism declares: “Baptism is necessary for salvation” (1257). It is the “sacrament of regeneration” at which time Catholics are “reborn as sons of God” (1213, 1214). “Baptism is God’s most beautiful and magnificent gift” (1216).

3. Membership Necessary for Salvation

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe only their Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has the exclusive truth that leads to eternal life. Mormons believe eternal life (exaltation to godhood) can be achieved only through obedience to the Church of Latter Day Saints. Likewise, the Roman Catholic Church declares itself as the sole means of salvation: “Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation” (846). (Note: On Dec. 6, 2000, Pope John Paul II denied this doctrine by stating knowledge of “Christ and His Church” is not necessary for salvation). All three religions claim to be the only true church and carry an “us versus them” mentality. Anyone outside their church is suspicious especially those members who chose to leave. All three religions either disfellowship, ostracize, shun or even condemn those who revoke their religious membership. Many Roman Catholics label anyone who evangelizes them as “anti-Catholic.”

4. Works Necessary for Salvation

Among the works Mormons must perform for exaltation is to have their marriage sealed in a Temple ceremony. Jehovah's Witnesses must change their living habits, go door to door, and be a witness for Jehovah to obtain their salvation. Roman Catholics not only need works for salvation, but they are condemned by the Council of Trent if they deny works are necessary: "In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints...In this way they [Catholics] attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers in the unity of the Mystical Body" (1477).

5. Death of Christ Insufficient

Mormons, Catholics and Jehovah's Witnesses all deny the death of Jesus provided full atonement for all sin. Mormons believe His death merely provides for the universal resurrection of all people. Jehovah's Witnesses and Catholics believe the death of Christ only provides an *opportunity* to attain eternal life. The Roman Catholic Church cites the need for purgatory and indulgences to atone for what Christ was able to do on Calvary's cross: "The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead, let us help and commemorate them. Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them" (1032).

6. Leaders Claim Supreme Authority

The Mormon Prophet/President declares himself to be the sole representative of God on earth. Jehovah's Witnesses declare the Watchtower Society is divinely guided and inspired and thus forbids any dissent among its members. Likewise, the Catholic Church makes similar claims: "The Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered" (882). "The Roman Pontiff, enjoys infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful, he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.... The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops" (891). Each religion, uses its "divinely inspired" authority to establish other books and traditions to be equal in authority to the Bible. The Jehovah's Witnesses have their publications from the Watchtower Society; the Mormons have their *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrines and Covenants*; while Roman Catholics have their Tradition: "Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence" (82).

7. Sole Interpreters of Scripture

Each religion believes its leaders are the only ones who are able to understand God's voice accurately. With this "divine authority" they are able to add, delete and distort Scriptures to maintain control over their followers. Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to rely solely on the Watchtower for interpretation. Each Mormon Prophet/President is believed to be the sole revelator of God to his church, and thus to reject his word is to reject the Lord himself. The Roman Catholic Church declares: "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone" (85). Private interpretation is forbidden by all three religions. Jehovah's Witnesses are trained not to trust themselves or outsiders to interpret the Bible. Rome pronounces: "To check unbridled spirits, it decrees that no one relying on his own judgment shall... in accordance with his own conceptions, presume to

interpret them [Scriptures] contrary to holy mother Church... Those who act contrary to this shall be made known by the ordinaries and punished in accordance with the penalties prescribed by the law" (*Decree Concerning Use of the Sacred Books*, Council Of Trent, Fourth Session).

8. Essential Christian Doctrines Denied or Redefined

Among the many essential doctrines that are denied by all three religions, the rejection of the Bible as the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice is the most critical. Jehovah's Witnesses deny the Trinity. Mormons deny there is only one God. Roman Catholics deny the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe it (Rom. 1:16). In place of the Gospel, Rome substitutes baptism, sacraments, indulgences, the Mass and purgatory for the forgiveness and remission of sins. The three religions mix truth with error by redefining Christian terms to deceive the unsuspecting. Some examples would include: Mormons redefine the Trinity to be three separate gods; Jehovah's Witnesses redefine the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force, not a person, and Catholics redefine grace as the *merited* favor of God: "We can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life" (2027).

After looking at these common similarities between Roman Catholics, Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, it is astonishing to see so many evangelicals embrace Roman Catholicism as a Christian denomination. It is more disconcerting to see highly influential evangelicals declaring that Roman Catholics are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Surely they would not say the same about Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses. These three false religions all have one more characteristic in common—their members are living with a false hope of escaping the coming judgment. We must evangelize Roman Catholics with the same fervor as we do Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses.