***Lightning Apologetics***

**MORMONISM – PART VI**

**Baptism of the Dead?**

Mormons believe people who have died can be baptized by proxy, thus allowing them to become Mormons after their deaths. The idea behind baptism for the dead is this: God wants each of us to be with him in glory. To effect this, he allows us to accept the Mormon gospel here on earth. If we do not, he sends us to a “spirit prison” until the Mormon gospel has be preached to us there and we convert.

Mormons believe that their church has missionaries in the “spirit world” who are busy spreading the Mormon gospel to dead people who have not yet received it. Should any of these dead people want to convert to Mormonism, they are required to abide by all its rules, one of which is water baptism. Hence the need for proxies to receive the corporeal waters of baptism.

You might be surprised to learn that the Mormon church has teams of men and women microfilming records of Catholic and Protestant parishes, cemetery records, birth and death certificates – virtually any sort of record pertaining to past generations. Temple Mormons hope, in time, to have all of the dead of previous generations baptized posthumously into the Mormon church.

**The Book of Mormon**

Remember, the devout Mormon believes this text is inspired because Joseph Smith said it is. He believes Smith had the authority to claim divine inspiration for the Book of Mormon because the book itself says Smith was a prophet and had such authority.

Mormon missionaries will gladly give you one for free if you want it. But what is the Book of Mormon?

At first glance the book of Mormon appears to be biblical in heft and style. It is couched in tedious “King James” English, and it features color renderings of Mormon scenes made to look like Bible illustrations.

The introduction tells you that the “Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God’s dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains, as does the Bible, the fullness of the everlasting gospel.” Naturally you ask yourself just what that phrase means.

According to the Mormon church, authentic Christianity can’t be found in any of the so-called Christian churches—only, of course, in the Mormon church.

Mormon’s teach that, after Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles taught the true doctrines of Jesus Christ and administered his sacred ordinances (roughly the equivalent of Catholic sacraments). After the death of the apostles, their successors continued the work of the gospel but with rapidly declining success. Within a few generations, the great apostasy foretold in the Bible had destroyed Christ’s Church (contrary to Jesus’ own promise in Matthew 16:18).

The Mormon church asserts that the Church Christ founded became increasingly corrupted by pagan ideas introduced by the nefarious members. (Sound familiar?) Over a period of years, the Church lost all relationship with the Church Christ established. Consequently, the keys of authority of the holy priesthood were withdrawn from the earth, and no man any longer had authorization to act in God’s name. From that time onward there were no valid baptisms, no laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit, no blessings of any kind, and no administration of sacred ordinances. Confusions and heretical doctrines increased and led to the plethora of Christian sects seen today.

Mormons claim that, in order to restore the true Church and true gospel to the earth, in 1820 God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in a grove of trees near his home. They told him that all professing Christians on the face of the earth were abominable and corrupt and that the true Church, having died out completely shortly after it began, was to be restored by Smith. Stay tuned as the final part of this work will be next week>>>>>>>>>>>>>>..