

UPWARD THOUGHT

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Explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desire to hear them. (Mosiah 27:35-36)

In my own defense

By Rob • February 12, 2019

There are a lot of people out there talking trash about me. I don't really have much of a reputation to save, nor pride to nurse, but I have to address these comments, at least in

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general, so that no one is precluded from benefiting from what I write by weak arguments against it.

Everyone will find something about me to get offended by. I'm an excommunicated Mormon, which makes LDS uncomfortable, but I was **excommunicated for believing Jesus**, which makes them REALLY uncomfortable. I believe that the text of the Book of Mormon was given by God, and believe that an honest analysis of it in the context of **science** and **archeology** support its contents rather than refute them, which makes progressive ex Mormons uncomfortable. I believe in the literal application of God's commandments as found in scripture and personal revelation, and by following that belief have come to the point where **I have had** visions

and visitations and revelations not a few,
including from Jesus, which seems to make
everyone uncomfortable.

To the LDS: I may have done more to promote
the doctrines believed by Joseph Smith than
anyone since Joseph Smith, yet I have made
public strong arguments against the core
traditions that came after Joseph Smith. This
makes me very dangerous.

To the Ex-Mormons: I have studied far more
history than most of them, agree with most of
their arguments against the LDS, and yet have
proved through my own experiences that God is
real and that anyone can obtain a seeing,
hearing, and touching relationship with him if
they will follow the commandments he gives.

This makes me very dangerous.

This analysis can be repeated for every sect.

New flash: I'm controversial.

Should this be surprising? No. People who teach that there is a better way are summarily rejected by all sides. This is why the path is strait and narrow, and few there be that find it.

The unfortunate effect of my controversy is that no matter how reason-based an argument I make, there are sufficient objections to tempt anyone from actually reading and thinking about what I write.

The point of what I write and what I do is not to

promote myself. If what I cared about was my reputation or what I get out of it, I would do things very differently. Thinking about this for even a nanosecond would yield many things I could do that would be more effective if personal gain were my aim.

"He thinks he is right and everyone else is wrong..."

False. I am inherently open-minded.

Like Joseph Smith said, I can say that my religion is no religion at all. I believe truth no matter where I find it, and I rejoice every time someone points something out to me that I hadn't before considered. No exceptions. The problem is that those who make this accusation of me do not

feel the same way. Because of this, they have not spent nearly as much time and effort as I have in acquiring truth. Because of that, almost everything they present to me is something I've already heard. They conflate their shallow and usually parroted argument with my being arrogant. It's not so.

"But I heard you..."

The story of the three little pigs is very different from the perspective of the wolf. There is a funny kid's book that tells it that way.

Take a second and think of all the things that legitimate holy men did in the scriptures. You know, really good people like Jesus and Isaiah

and the like. We have the true story of what happened in the scriptures. But this is told from the perspective of believers. How do you think it would be different if it was told from the perspective of non-believers?

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah brings a boy back to life. He "stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again.'" In spite of the fact that Elijah was actually acting in God's name, and actually raised this kid from the dead, if the story were told by some people, it would read: "Elijah molested this kid three times! Clearly, he is a fraud!"

Luckily (that I know of at least), no one has accused me of pedophilia. However, there are at

least a few **rumors** floating around that are equally baseless, that are at best gross misrepresentations of true events, and at worse, completely fabricated.

Note: Lest they say "see! He just compared himself to Jesus, Isaiah, and Elijah," my point here is to say if these men, being above reproach, can be smeared so, how much more the people below their stature?

"But this guy really hates you..."

I have at least half a dozen people whose whole mission in life seems to be to say very nasty things about me--typically in places I don't know about and therefore can't defend myself.

Suppose for a moment that God knows much more than you do. What tools do you suppose he would use to try to get that knowledge to you? Though not the only mechanism, the scriptures are replete with him using people to do that, and for good reasons (which I won't get into here). And what does this look like? It almost always takes the following form: some weirdo shows up without any earthly authority and tells people there is a better way of doing things. And, in unison, they hate him.

While being hated and ill spoken of does not imply that you convey God's word, everyone who conveys God's word is hated and ill spoken of.

As written in the Book of Mormon: "...if a prophet come among you and declareth unto you the word of the Lord, which testifieth of your sins and iniquities, ye are angry with him, and cast him out and seek all manner of ways to destroy him; yea, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifieth that your deeds are evil."
(Helaman 13:26)

Now, I have to make a disclaimer because I'm invoking a scripture using the p word in explaining something about myself. "Prophet" is a word that almost always either means more or less than those invoking it mean. So here is a paraphrase that might not trigger people as badly:

If someone who claims to have higher order truth in some topic tries to persuade you that his positions are more efficacious than yours, you will get angry; you will do whatever you can to shut him up and discredit his message, including saying he is a bad person and does bad things, because he says what you think and do is capable of improvement.

The real problem: the ideology of "whatever I know is all there is to know"

Of course, truth searching requires rational evaluation and, when that checks out, personal testing. It isn't enough to just dismiss things out of hand because of some ad hominem argument.

But very few people want to consider that what they believe is either incorrect or imperfect (although you kind of have to believe that if you also believe God is all knowing and you are not).

Most people believe that whatever their heart desires is right and above questioning. This is truer in **modern times** than in the past, when people used to assume that someone, somewhere, knew more than they did about something.

Modern people embrace a belief held by only the extremely wicked in the past. They do not believe there could be anything better than what they already believe, and they will viciously attack anyone who dares challenge

that assertion:

27 But behold, if a man shall come among you
and shall say: Do this, and there is no iniquity; do
that and ye shall not suffer; yea, he will say:
Walk after the pride of your own hearts; yea,
walk after the pride of your eyes, and do
whatsoever your heart desireth—and if a man
shall come among you and say this, ye will
receive him, and say that he is a prophet.

28 Yea, ye will lift him up, and ye will give unto
him of your substance; ye will give unto him of
your gold, and of your silver, and ye will clothe
him with costly apparel; and because he
speaketh flattering words unto you, and he saith
that all is well, then ye will not find fault with
him.

29 O ye wicked and ye perverse generation; ye

hardened and ye stiffnecked people, how long
will ye suppose that the Lord will suffer you?
Yea, how long will ye suffer yourselves to be led
by foolish and blind guides? Yea, how long will ye
choose darkness rather than light? (Helaman 13)

Jesus was not sent to the 99 who thought they
needed no repentance. Instead, he ministered to
the 1 who believed there was something better
than what they had. If you hear a chorus of
people saying what is quoted above--that you
can imagine what you want reality to be and
then act as if it were that way, and anyone who
dares say it isn't so is Hitler, that should be a sign
to you that maybe that message they are ranting
against might be worth listening to, rather than
the opposite.

Conclusion

In fact, if you are willing to investigate the criticisms people use against me, you will see that the arguments they give against me are actually strong arguments *in favor of* considering what I have said.

I've written a book laying out some false traditions in the LDS church, but I don't and won't condemn the founding doctrines or the founder like most ex Mormons have done. I've had charismatic experiences with God, but I haven't founded a church like most who make that claim have done. I've had "special" experiences, but instead of claiming that makes me special like most have done, I've written a whole book making the argument that these are

obtained by following very basic doctrines within the reach of every person. I've spent years of my life writing blog posts and books to share what I'm learning, but I haven't and won't charge money for them as everyone seems to have done. All I get for my work is people saying awful things about me. I believe in polygamy, but I have not done any of the things most expect me to do (though some incorrectly accuse me of doing so): in fact, I've actually made what is in my opinion the strongest argument **against the practice**. You should ask yourself why.

My behavior does not match the motives my enemies claim I have. It *does* match the modern version of behavior of people in the scriptures. You should ask yourself why.

I can't spend the time necessary to answer every criticism of myself that I hear about. I have far too much writing to do, and no more hours of the night left from which to draw. But I hope these thoughts give you reason to exercise some caution in your interpretation of what you hear.

Everything I have written has had the following objective: Help people acquire and assimilate higher truth through trusting God, seeking his word, and obeying it more fully than they currently do.

I hope you consider what I write, and that you test it, and keep it if it is of value to you.

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