

November 22, 2011

(I'll cc Sister C in an email too with this letter that I am sending you)

Hello Elder D and Sister D,

Thank you for spending some time with me on Tuesday November 9 at the LDS ward on Jane Street.

I just wanted to recap some of the major points that we discussed. I hope that I have paraphrased things correctly. I took some extra time so I could consult with some older teachings of your church. Some texts are hard to find but they are available from certain bookstores. It's a large letter since I wanted to add some extra things.

### Eternal Life and Marriage

From the things you mentioned and from the material I read, eternal life (exaltation, living life as a god) is not granted to single people. Eternal increase (part of eternal life) is only possible through a marriage. But from the Ensign article, it appears that single people have the ability to get married after they die so they can qualify for this blessing.

From the teachings of Jesus and Paul, I believe that singleness and marriage are both gifts from God. Marriage is not for everyone as per the biblical teachings. God accepts both and he does not withhold eternal life from a believer if he or she chooses to remain single.

Paul said, "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not \*in marriage doeth better" (1 Corinthians 7:38). He also said, "For I would that all men were even as I myself. *But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that*" (verse 7).

Jesus has this encounter with and his disciples: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. *His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it*" (Matthew 19:8-12)

I am able to receive this saying of Jesus. Are you?

I don't believe that a man and woman will be married for eternity based on the following teachings:

Paul said, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39). The dead husband remains in an unmarried state. The living woman is not eternally married to her dead husband so she can marry another man.

In Matthew 22:23-30 the Sadducees came to Jesus asking whom the woman would be the wife to in the resurrection since she had 7 husbands and they had all died. Jesus said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

A few days after our meeting I recalled some biblical passages that I wished I had shared with the D's.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:31-34, 41).

LDS theology would mark single Mormons as "goats" because they do not inherit eternal life.

### Destruction surrounding the crucifixion of Christ

According to the Book of Mormon, severe destruction occurred at the moment of Christ's death. Darkness persisted for 3 days and there was an earthquake lasting 3 hours. Cities are reported to have been destroyed (about 16 cities are mentioned by name. Believe it or not they even named one of these cities "Jerusalem.") The temple veil was not rent in twain. In fact, this very important event is not even mentioned.

That's quite a huge difference with the Bible. There was one momentary earthquake in the Bible. Darkness lasted only 3 hours (Luke 23:44). No cities were destroyed and

people were not slain. The only person that died was Jesus. Do you remember the words of Jesus while he was on the cross? “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Do you also recall when a few of his disciples wanted a village destroyed because they had rejected His preaching? “And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village” (Luke 9:51-56).

Do you notice this major difference between the two Jesus Christs?

#### When was Christ crucified?

We did not discuss this topic but I just wanted to add it for your own reflection.

When I read the Book of Mormon it is off by 10 days in relation to when Christ was crucified. This is very important in my opinion because it reveals these people were not descendants of the Jews, who were meticulous in keeping dates. One can even study the behavior of the Jews today. They still know when to celebrate their feast days (Yom Kippur, etc).

3 Nephi 8:3, 5 says, “And the people began to look with great earnestness for the sign which had been given by the prophet Samuel, the Lamanite, yea, for the time that there should be darkness for the space of three days over the face of the land. And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the *first month, on the fourth day* of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.”

What is the significance of this? Well, Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover. “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord’s Passover” (Leviticus 23:5). When I checked further, feast days are not even mentioned in the Book of Mormon. When I add up these two important facts it leads me to conclude the Nephites and Lamanites were not descendants of Jacob.

## The tearing of the temple veil

I noticed after searching the Book of Mormon that the event of the tearing of the temple veil is not mentioned.

I asked Elder D what its significance was and he mentioned that God tore the veil in two as a sign of his wrath for the Jews forsaking the Old Testament Covenant. I asked him for some references in any scripture or magazine. He could provide none – it was only his opinion.

I went online to the church's web site (<http://lds.org/manual?lang=eng> → Seminary) and found the New Testament Student Study Guide and the New Testament Teacher Study Guide. Looking at the section for Hebrews chapters 7-10, I was not able to find the word "veil." The significance of the tearing of the temple veil was not there either.

I did a search for "temple veil" at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and found 3 mentions (only 1 relevant).

- <http://lds.org/ensign/1990/07/the-atonement-of-jesus-christ-part-1?lang=eng&query=%22temple+veil%22>

*"This takes us back to the kapporet, for only the high priest knew the name which he whispered for admission through the temple veil on the Day of Atonement."*

*"It is understandable that the kapporet should be called the mercy seat, for it was there, in the most guarded and sacred part of the sanctuary, that Israel was reconciled at-one with God on the Day of Atonement: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle [succoth, booth, tent] which is called the Holiest of all ... [contained] the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." Thus said Paul to the Hebrews. (Heb. 9:3, 5.)"*

*"The sense of distinction between the earthly and heavenly [was] still kept." Even more important than the idea that the veil introduces us into another realm is that "the curtains have also the value of suggesting the curtain in the Temple which separated the sanctuary from the world of ordinary life."*

These 3 quotes also missed the significance as taught by the Bible.

Sister C provided me with a video called *"Between Heaven and Earth."* This had a very brief mention of the veil tearing. I will quote the words of the speakers. The discussion began at about the 12:13 mark.

What do they say is the significance?

Boyd K. Packer (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) – *"When Christ was crucified that veil was rent ... meaning symbolically that he had passed through the veil."*

I would have liked to hear him say more.

Next comes Jeffrey R. Holland (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) - 12:35 – *“Whatever used to be is gone. Whatever was has been rent asunder. The old law, as valuable as it was, as important as it was, ... was now fulfilled.”*

He’s getting closer.

Next comes Dean L. Larsen - a Temple Presidents - 12:53 – *“The rending of the veil in the temple, it seems to me, was symbolic of that barrier between mortality and eternal life being broken forever. And the freedom and the opportunity given to all mankind now to pass through that veil and return to the presence of God.”*

He sort of gets it but he misses an important part.

Let’s turn to the Bible now.

“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:6-15).

“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:25-28).

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:11-12).

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*” (Hebrews 10:14-22).

Do you understand the biblical meaning?

In the Old Testament the people had to go through the priest and the temple for salvation. And only the high priest was able to go into the Holiest of Holies once a year. Females were not allowed to enter. But with the tearing of the temple veil, Christ has opened the way for us (both males and females) to enter God's presence (the Holiest of Holies) through the atonement. This is because Jesus has made these males and females members of the royal priesthood of God through faith in him.

Not understanding this, Latter-day Saints have once again placed human priests (only males) and their earthly temples in the way of all people (even their members) for them to attain eternal life. In LDS theology only those who go to the temple and participate in all its ordinances may qualify for eternal life and return to God's presence. Many Mormons themselves will never qualify to enter the temple because they are not worthy enough because they failed the interview process given by their presiding officer.

In orthodox Christianity, Jesus is our one and only high priest. He has opened the way so that we do not need earthly priests and temples to approach God.

I found more in-depth commentary on the tearing of the temple veil:

[http://www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/6\\_citizens.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/6_citizens.htm)  
[http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/6\\_highpriest.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/6_highpriest.htm)  
[http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/7\\_covenant.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/7_covenant.htm)  
[http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/9\\_drawnear.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/9_drawnear.htm)

## Salvation and Hell

I believe that salvation is eternal life with God based on our faith in the death and resurrection of Christ for the atonement of our sins.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *eternal life*. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *everlasting life*. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:14-18).

When I do some investigation about the term “salvation” in LDS theology, I discovered that there are 6 definitions (Ensign, Have You Been Saved? by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, May 1998).

I’ll discuss 3 of the main ones:

- The free gift of resurrection that Christ’s atonement provides to everyone (whether atheist, Christian, or Muslim, etc) so that they may have their souls (spirits) and bodies reunited to appear before God for judgment.
- Escaping the punishment in the spirit world to inherit some degree of glory in God’s lesser kingdoms.
- One’s exaltation to godhood (with eternal life). This is the context of the Mormon prophet in 2 Nephi 25:23 – “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”

Sister D mentioned that even adulterers would inherit a place in some type of glorious kingdom. That would probably entail a life even greater than the finest lifestyle on earth.

I would compare this with biblical teaching – “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers ... shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

She also mentioned that those who knowing rejected Christ would also inherit a kingdom of glory.

I would compare this with biblical teaching – “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). Those who knowingly reject Christ do *not* inherit a kingdom of glory; they perish.

Sister D asked me whether those who reject Christ go to hell. I indicated yes. To me, hell is where God’s presence is not. Living with God in heaven is love, peace and joy.

But living without God (even on our earth) is a form of hell. Imagine living without God in eternity. We tend to think a lot about the “fire and brimstone” part of hell and believe that God could never send someone there for eternity. I must admit – that is difficult to grasp sometimes – but Jesus was the one person who talked a lot about this subject. We need to also consider God’s Holiness. There is mercy but there is also judgment.

Latter-day Saints believe that the fallen angels number into the billions – they constitute the one-third of Heavenly Father’s and Mother’s spirit children who chose sides with the devil at some premortal council in Heaven. How did I come up with the figure of “billions?” The earth’s population is over currently 6 billion (we just past 7 billion in October 2011 so I will round this down to make it an even number - 6). So as a simple example, that would mean God had 9 billions spirit sons and daughters – 3 billion of them (one-third) are fallen – they became the demonic angels.

So if God chose to put the devil and these, his spirit children, into the lake of fire for eternity for one wrong choice and then also send fornicators, idolaters and adulterers (1 Cor. 6:9-10) there too instead of some kingdom of glory (p.s. Joseph Smith taught these wicked people end up with mansions in the telestial kingdom – Doctrine and Covenants 76:111), then who are we to question Him?

### Authority from God

In this section my questions were directed specifically to Sister D. Do you have the authority to baptize? The authority to heal? The authority to cast out evil spirits?

In all cases she replied “no.”

Apparently authority is only for male priesthood holders. Females in the LDS Church do not hold the priesthood.

In my faith we believe that males and females are members of the royal priesthood of believers offering up spiritual sacrifices unto God (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

### The Nature of God

This was the one topic I kept returning to over and over again because it was a major difference.

I made the observations that a key teaching was omitted from the 2009 version of Gospel Principles. It was there in the 1997 version.

Let me quote the 1997 version.



“When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil [died] before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.

*This is the way our Heavenly Father became God. It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God. ... He was once a man like us; ... God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did”* (chapter 47, page 305).

Source: <http://lds.org/library/display/0,4945,11-1-13-59,00.html>

This key teaching has been removed from the 2009 version.

I also found this teaching of “Heavenly Father is a man who became a God” in another teaching manual – *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*.

“Through a continual course of progression, our Heavenly Father has received exaltation and glory, and He points us out the same path.”

Source: <http://institute.lds.org/manuals/doctrines-of-the-gospel-student-manual/doc-gosp-31-37-33.asp>

We don’t worship a man who became a God. In orthodox Christianity, Heavenly Father is not an exalted man. He has always been God.

Elder D brought something to my attention when he presented a physical copy of both the 1997 and 2009 versions of Gospel Principles.

There is little change on one specific page but to me it has some significance.

The 1997 version has © 1978, 1979, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1995, 1997

The 2009 version has only © 1978, 2009

The 2009 version omits the 1997 teaching and it also omits the reference to 1997 in the copyright. To a casual observer this would lead him to believe that there were only two versions, thus pointing him only to the 2009 version (the 1978 version is out of print and impossible to get unless you can find it on Ebay or in someone’s basement).

Elder D used the word “hiding” when he pointed out the copyright to me. It seems like a suitable word.

The only other place that I’m aware of that records this teaching of Joseph Smith is the *King Follett Discourse* (<http://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFLibrary/18.2LarsonKingFollett-788e0c92-f320-42a3-bccc-7bf232ab8432.pdf>) and “*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph*

*Smith*” – compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith (1938). Maybe you are even familiar with these words of Joseph Smith – “*We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see*” (page 345). Not even the 2008 version of “*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*” has it recorded there.

On the surface it appears that the LDS Church does not want to teach Joseph Smith’s first principle of the gospel.

Elder D mentioned several times that I was focusing more on the ‘dangling fruit way over there’ (i.e. the “meat” so to speak) instead of the basics, starting from step 1 (i.e. the “milk”).

But Joseph Smith said what I was talking about was the first principle of the Gospel. If your first principle of the Gospel leads you to believe in a false god then is it wise going to step 2? I would say “no.” If your faith is built on worshipping a false god then only the second death awaits you at the judgment seat of the true God.

Sister D mentioned that it was possible for her to be saved even after being deceived into believing in a false god. She was placing the blame on someone else as Adam and Eve had done in the Garden of Eden after they ate from the forbidden tree.

In our discussions, I talked to them about the true God – the God from eternity to eternity. Joseph Smith came preaching a different god – a man who became a god. Allow the Spirit to bring you to the realization of the true God. Don’t allow the false spirit to lead you into believing in the false god.

### The Introduction page of the Book of Mormon

In closing Sister D read most of the Introduction page from the Book of Mormon. Near the end of the Introduction page, we find these words: “ ... and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that *Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God*, manifesting himself unto all nations.”

Given all that we have discussed before about the Mormon Heavenly Father being a man who became a God, I asked Sister D “How is Jesus the Eternal God?”

There was no concise answer – or what sounded like “I don’t know.”

I then asked Elder D – “How is Heavenly Father the Eternal God when Joseph Smith taught he was a man who became a god?”

He did not reply. We had come full circle again to the main theme in our discussion.

In reality neither the Mormon Jesus nor the Mormon Heavenly Father is the Eternal God because they are not God from eternity to eternity.

And who is the Holy Spirit? Is he a spirit brother of Jesus (Jesus is taught to be the first spirit child of heavenly parents) who too had to become a god or was he God from eternity to eternity?

The missionaries answered that they did not know.

What was Jesus before he was born as the first spirit child of heavenly parents?

Again the missionaries answered that they did not know.

I would repeat something I said on a previous page: I talked with them about the true God – the God from eternity to eternity. Joseph Smith came preaching a different god – a man who became a god.

Allow the Spirit to bring you to the realization of the true God. Don't allow the false spirit to lead you into believing in a false god.

I hope these missionaries from Utah make a wise choice.

Sincerely,

Tony