

The Pearl of Great Price is one of the canonized scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is made up of the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham.

The title comes from Matthew 13:45-46: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

Mormon elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the quorum of the twelve apostles, published the compilation of some revelations and writings of Joseph Smith. He said it would be a source of instruction and edification to the Latter-day Saints (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 2).

The Book of Abraham is said to be Joseph Smith’s translation of ancient Egyptian papyrus scrolls that were brought to Kirtland, Ohio in 1835 by Michael Chandler.

With a careful study of the teachings in the Pearl of Great Price, one soon discovers that it departs from biblical truth and even contradicts certain Mormon Church teachings.

Six days of creation

You may be familiar with the verse that says, “In the beginning, God created.”

But in the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Abraham says the Gods created the earth and then they rested on the seventh day (Abraham 4:9-10). “In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 16).

Gospel Principles reveals Adam helped to create the earth (Glossary section, p. 376). Adam is referred to as Michael the archangel (D&C 107:54) and the prince of all (D&C 27:11). There are two Michaels: the archangel and a regular angel—similar to Gabriel and Raphael (D&C 128:21). Joseph Smith and others are also thought to have helped God create the earth (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, pp. 7-8, 38).

Latter-day Saints do not specify how their Adam (Michael the archangel) can be in spirit prison (D&C 138:38-47) and yet be able to dispute with the devil for the body of Moses (Jude 1:9).

The earth was created in six days and God rested from his works on the seventh day according to the Bible.

But *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual* says the heavens and the earth were not created in six literal days as we know it: “But first, what is a day? It is a specified time period; it is an age, an eon, a division of eternity. There is no revealed recitation specifying that each of the six days involved in the Creation was of the same duration” (p. 17).

The Bible gives us God's account of how long a day is: "Morning came, evening came, one day." This is the simple meaning of the duration of one day. The same thing happens today. Morning comes, evening comes, and one day has passed.

If the six days are not literal days as the Bible explains, why have people made the assumption that the seventh day (the Sabbath) is a literal day consisting of twenty-four hours as we measure it?

Mormon scriptures reveal the six days are in fact literal ones (Mosiah 13:17-19). One even finds a revelation of six literal days and a one thousand year reign of Christ (D&C 77:12).

But then it seems like the creation of the earth took six Kolob days (six thousand earth years). The star Kolob is closest to God's throne according to the Pearl of Great Price.

"Kolob was after the manner of the Lord, according to its times and seasons in the revolutions thereof; that one revolution was a day unto the Lord, after his manner of reckoning, it being one thousand years according to the time appointed unto that whereon thou standest. This is the reckoning of the Lord's time, according to the reckoning of Kolob" (Abraham 3:3).

"But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the time that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Now I, Abraham, saw that it was after the Lord's time, which was after the time of Kolob; for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning" (Abraham 5:13).

Do you see the obvious difference with the Bible?

Were Adam and Eve created in the image of God?

Joseph Smith revealed Heavenly Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as ours (D&C 130:22). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts Genesis 1:26 literally—Adam and Eve were created without blood in their veins.

"When Adam was in the Garden of Eden, he was not subject to death. There was no blood in his body and he could have remained there forever. This is true of all the other creations" (Doctrines of Salvation, volume 1, pages 76-77).

"After the fall ... the forbidden fruit had the power to create blood and change his nature and mortality took the place of immortality, and all things, partaking of the change, became mortal" (IBID, page 77).

"There was no blood in Adam's body before the fall. He was not then "flesh" as we know it, that is in the sense of mortality" (IBID, page 92).

“While I do not fully understand all the biochemistry involved, I do know that their physical bodies did change; blood began to circulate in their bodies. Adam and Eve thereby became mortal. Happily for us, they could also beget children and fulfill the purposes for which the world was created” (General Conference, October 1993, Constancy Amid Change).

The LDS Church teaches Adam and Eve could not have children because they were not mortal. They did not yet have blood in their veins (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 19). But Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother are immortal too according to LDS theology. Now, if immortal heavenly parents of flesh, bones, and no blood procreated, couldn't Adam and Eve's bodies of flesh, bones, and no blood also have procreated?

Gospel Fundamentals has some peculiar teachings about the ability to have children. “The power to have children is very sacred. Our Father in Heaven has given us a law that tells us how to use this power” (p. 142). “Using the power our Father in Heaven has placed in our bodies within marriage will bring happiness” (p. 145). Knowledge and ability is power.

While some or all Mormons believe Eve was given in marriage to Adam in the Garden of Eden, the LDS Church teaches Adam and Eve initially lacked the ability to procreate.

God gave mankind a command to “be fruitful and multiply.” Adam and Eve already had the ability to have offspring before they sinned. The same is true of the animals God created. God told them to “be fruitful and multiply.”

The scriptures reveal, “Let us make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26). What exactly do Latter-day Saints mean by image? Is it a body with a head, two arms, and two legs? Is it a spiritual body or a physical body? Is it in the image of Heavenly Father, in the image of Jesus, or both?

Why should you consider such questions?

Well, a Book of Mormon prophet said Jesus created all men in the image of his spirit body (Ether 3:15-16). Or does being created in the image and likeness of God mean a whole lot more?

LDS president Spencer W. Kimball taught Eve was not literally created from Adam's rib. He said, “The story of the rib, of course, is figurative” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 11; “The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood,” *Ensign*, March 1976, p. 71).

This is contradicted by Genesis 2:21-23.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

Sounds literal to me. Mr. Kimball made a doctrinal error.

Have you ever wondered why you were created?

“The very purpose of man’s creation is to enable him to gain joy. Happiness is the object and design of our existence” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 397).

Brigham Young said men were created to “become Gods, to command the creation and redemption of worlds, or to extinguish suns by their breath, and disorganize worlds, hurling them back into their chaotic state” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 38).

The Bible reveals the real purpose of man’s creation: “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). We were planned for God’s pleasure (Rev. 4:11). It’s all for his glory, not ours.

The Mormon prophet Joseph Smith taught Adam and Eve were not created but are co-eternal with God.

“Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:29-33).

“Howbeit that he made the greater star; as, also, if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal” (Abraham 3:18).

Man is an eternal and uncreated spirit (intelligence) according to Mormon scripture. How can Joseph Smith believe Adam and Eve were created in God’s image when he also taught Adam and Eve were co-eternal with God?

The Book of Mormon teaches Jesus created all the spirits and they are not eternal (Ether 4:15-16). The Bible teaches likewise (Col. 1:16).

LDS scriptures reveal Adam was the first flesh upon the earth, even before the animals: “And man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also” (Moses 3:7). What type of body did the animals, which were created before him, have?

Was God's creation good?

The LDS Church teaches Adam and Eve could not have children because they had no blood in their veins. They were able to obey God's command to be fruitful and multiply when they disobeyed him and ate from the forbidden tree. Mormon theology reveals Adam and Eve had to disobey in order to obey.

God's creation was said to have been good and very obedient (Abraham 4:21-25, 31).

How could Adam and Eve be considered very obedient when they disobeyed one of God's commandments and they lacked the ability to carry out his other one? Were the animals also unable to procreate before the Fall? Do you consider this as being a good creation of God or his creation being very obedient?

The Mormon teaching that Adam and Eve could not procreate before their disobedience is not biblical teaching. When God gave them the command to obey him, he also gave them ability and knowledge to do so. The same is true for the animals.

The Council of Heaven

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes there was a council in heaven to discuss the creation of the earth and the salvation of human beings.

Heavenly Father supposedly called a grand council in heaven to present his plan for our progression (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, pp. 348-349, 365; D&C 121:32). Other Gods were present but their identities are unknown. People learned that if they followed this plan they would become like him—a god.

They also learned God would provide an earth for them where they would be tested—because being tested in the pre-mortal existence was not sufficient (Abraham 3:24-27). A veil would cover their memories so they would forget their heavenly home, where they existed once with Heavenly Mother and Father. The children of Heavenly Father were called “spirits” (vv. 18-19), “intelligences” (v. 22), and “souls” (v. 23).

Lucifer offered to redeem mankind at this council: “That Satan ... he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost ... But, behold, my Beloved Son ... said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:1-2).

Why did Lucifer want to become God's son? Wasn't he already a son of God and a brother of Jesus as LDS theology teaches?

There is another aspect of this council of heaven that Latter-day Saints have not considered. Suppose you have a person called John at this council. He learns that Jesus will be his redeemer on the future planet that will be created. While on earth, he meets a

nice lady called Jane and they get married in a Mormon temple, and they follow all the precepts of the LDS Church.

If the LDS system is true, John becomes exalted to a god with Jane by his side. They receive the same power and glory as their Heavenly Father and they become the heavenly parents of another planet. They have twelve billion spirit children for example. John organizes his own council of heaven and another version of Jesus and Lucifer (maybe even with the same name) offer to redeem his creation. John chooses this other Jesus to be the redeemer. John creates his version of Adam and Eve in his own Garden of Eden and he is worshipped as the god of his earth. As time passes by, John sends his only begotten son to his earth to redeem his children from their sins. Remember that Joseph Smith taught spirits are not created, but they are co-eternal with God (D&C 93:29-33; Abraham 3:18).

Go back in time now to when John was just a spirit child at the council of heaven, where he learned that Jesus would atone for his sins and one day he would become a god. Where are John and Jane's twelve billion spirit children that they will have in the future by following the LDS gospel? Are they not co-eternal with them too?

The birthright and the priesthood

The birthright is said to have passed from Abraham to Isaac and from Isaac to Jacob. 1 Chronicles 5:2 says the birthright belonged to Joseph, a son of Jacob. In Genesis 48:8-19, we learn that Jacob set Ephraim before Manasseh. It is believed that Ephraim was to receive the birthright because he was called God's firstborn (Jer. 31:9).

From <http://scriptures.lds.org/en/gs/e/28>, it appears the LDS Church attaches the possession of the birthright to having the priesthood. In addition, she elevates Ephraim above all tribes.

“The tribe of Ephraim: Ephraim was given the birthright in Israel (1 Chr. 5: 1-2; Jer. 31: 9). In the last days their privilege and responsibility is to bear the priesthood, take the message of the restored gospel to the world, and raise an ensign to gather scattered Israel (Isa. 11:12-13; 2 Ne. 21:12-13). The children of Ephraim will crown with glory those from the north countries who return in the last days (D&C 133:26-34).”

The Bible reveals the birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, not only to one son (1 Chr. 5:1-2).

If Latter-day Saints believe the priesthood has anything to do with the birthright, they should consider verse 2: “For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, but the birthright was Joseph's.” Ephraim did not prevail over Judah.

Also, study these other biblical passages: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” (Hos. 4:17). “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of

Judah his pleasant plant” (Isa. 5:17). “Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved” (Ps. 78:67-68). Judah was chosen for a special purpose, not Ephraim.

The Levites had the priesthood in the Old Testament, not Ephraim or Manasseh.

In regards to Doctrine and Covenants 133:26-34, it should be worth noting that this is after the return of Christ, not before.

Also, Doctrine and Covenants 86:8 says, “Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers.”

Joseph Smith said about the priesthood, “He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood ... and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage” (D&C 113:8). Priesthood holders are literally the lawful heirs according “to the flesh” (D&C 86:8-9).

Since Latter-day Saints are believed to come from Abraham and non-Abrahamic peoples, what lineage of Zion has a right to this priesthood? Zion is said to have the power and the authority of the priesthood but this new definition of Zion excludes women (and excluded Negro males before 1978).

Did one son of Jacob hold the priesthood or did Joseph Smith believe that other sons beside Lehi held the priestly office? Was the tribe of Ephraim (excluding Lehi and his descendants—those of Manasseh) the only one to hold the Melchizedek priesthood? It would be wise for Latter-day Saints to determine if Ephraim, Lehi, Nephi, Levi, or Judah had the priesthood and which ones.

Joseph Smith III was eleven years old when his father was murdered. After that experience, he had nothing to do with any of the groups which left Nauvoo; neither did he join their church. After gaining a testimony of his own, he succeeded his father and was ordained prophet and president of another church on April 6, 1860. This church is called the Community of Christ and is based in Independence, Missouri. Do you remember this important city in Mormon theology?

It is unclear why Brigham Young was chosen to succeed Joseph Smith as the next prophet by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when he was not Joseph’s literal descendant.

The Bible says the tribe of Levi, not Ephraim, had the priesthood in the Old Testament. No other tribe participated in the temple ordinances. At God’s appointed time, the priesthood was changed—Jesus became our High Priest (Heb. 9:11). Jeremiah 31 is talking about Israel, not America.

What could be the scriptural rationale for the LDS Church denying the priesthood to certain races before 1978?

Noah's son Ham married Egyptus, a descendant of Cain, thus preserving the Negro lineage through the flood. Anyone possessing Egyptian blood was cursed as pertaining to the priesthood (Abraham 1:20-27; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 343).

What is the importance of this?

Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob, married an Egyptian woman called Asenath. She was the daughter of a priest in the city of On. This pagan priest served Ra, the Egyptian sun-god. The Greeks called this city Heliopolis, or "city of the sun." Manasseh and Ephraim (the two sons of Joseph) were both half-Hebrew and half-Egyptian (Gen. 41:45-52). Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh, who was half Egyptian (Alma 10:3). Abraham took an Egyptian slave to wife (Gen. 16:3). Moses married an Ethiopian woman, a descendant of Ham (Gen. 10:6; Num. 12:1).

It is unclear why Joseph Smith regarded Pharaoh as being of royal blood due to this king's bloodline through the Canaanites (Abraham 1:20-27). Egypt signified that which was forbidden. Abraham, Moses, Joseph, the Pharaohs, and all the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh are cursed as pertaining to the priesthood because they either married one in a forbidden lineage or their descendants have a bloodline that is cursed.

Kolob and the reckoning of time

Kolob is the name of a star which is closest to God's throne.

"And I saw the stars, that they were very great, and that one of them was nearest unto the throne of God; and there were many great ones which were near unto it; And the Lord said unto me: These are the governing ones; and the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me, for I am the Lord thy God: I have set this one to govern all those which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest" (Abraham 3:2-3).

One day on Kolob is equal to one thousand years on earth.

"Kolob was after the manner of the Lord, according to its times and seasons in the revolutions thereof; that one revolution was a day unto the Lord, after his manner of reckoning, it being one thousand years according to the time appointed unto that whereon thou standest. This is the reckoning of the Lord's time, according to the reckoning of Kolob" (Abraham 3:4).

The *Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual* equates "revolution" (Abraham 3:4) with proximity. It is unclear why the writer excluded "time" since that is the context of Abraham's passage.

“Abraham learned that wherever there are two stars one will be greater than the other, and that there are other stars greater than those two, until Kolob, which is the greatest of all. He learned that it is not size that makes one star or planet greater than another, but rather its proximity to Kolob. So it is with the children of God—their greatness and glory will depend upon their proximity to the Creator, Jesus Christ, who is nearest unto the throne of God, the great one, the first creation” (p. 37).

“The planet which is the lesser light [the moon] ... is above or greater than that upon which thou standest in point of reckoning ... the set time of the lesser light [the moon] is a longer time as to its reckoning than the reckoning of the time of the earth upon which thou standest. And where these two facts exist, there shall be another planet whose reckoning of time shall be longer still” (Abraham 3:5-8).

The footnotes section of the Pearl of Great Price says the expression “set time is a longer time” is a reference to the moon moving more slowly than the earth on its axis.

Using the movement of a heavenly body about its axis is understandable as another discussion point, but it cannot be used in the context of this passage because the seasons of the earth are not determined solely by its rotation on its axis. Its rotation around the sun must also be considered.

Mars or Venus, depending on which is farther from the star Kolob, will have a greater (or longer) reckoning time than the earth.

Let’s focus on the phrase “reckoning of time.” Joseph Smith’s revelation has several problems if you substitute two meanings of what the reckoning of time could be.

Scenario 1: the time for revolution around Kolob.

This explanation fits nicely with Joseph Smith’s intended purpose because the words “revolution” and “time” are mentioned in the Book of Abraham.

Earth, in the grand scheme of things, revolves around Kolob according to this passage. The sun in our solar system also revolves around Kolob. As Kolob’s revolution is one day (to God’s throne), the earth’s revolution is one thousand years (Abraham 3:4). Both the sun and the earth are governed, in the end, by Kolob (v. 3).

Joseph Smith revealed the reckoning time of the moon is greater than the earth and that the moon was above the earth (vv. 7, 17). Well, he was partly right and partly wrong. Sometimes the moon is below the earth, making the reckoning time of the moon less than the earth.

The times and seasons of Kolob are determined by its revolution around God’s abode (v. 4). God set up Kolob to govern all those [planets] which belong to the same order as that upon which Abraham was standing (v. 3).

Scientifically speaking, Earth's seasons are dictated by its revolution around the sun in our solar system and not Kolob (unless Kolob is that sun). The moon's seasons are not determined by the sun because the moon has no seasons.

Scenario 2: the distance from the star Kolob. This is the context of the passage from *Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*.

Depending on where the moon is in relation to its orbit around the Earth at a given moment in time, you have two variations: (1) Kolob <-> planet <-> moon <-> Earth <-> planet or (2) Kolob <-> planet <-> Earth <-> moon <-> planet.

Since the moon revolves around the Earth, why would Joseph Smith believe the moon's time of reckoning (its distance from Kolob) is greater than the Earth (vv. 7, 17)? The moon's time of reckoning would be less during some positions in its orbit around the Earth.

Recall the earlier teaching that proximity to Kolob gives a planetary object a greater glory than another (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 37). So, you could make the statement that the moon has a greater glory than the Earth sometimes and the Earth has a greater glory than the moon at other times. Sometimes Earth could surpass Jupiter in glory and sometimes Jupiter could surpass the Earth in glory.

These planetary movements in their orbits make Joseph's teaching rather absurd.

There are other stories in the Pearl of Great Price which go against biblical teachings and even contradict the Book of Mormon.

God is said to be the one who told Abraham to lie to the Egyptians about Sarah being his sister (Abraham 2:22-25). But Genesis 12:11-13 says it was not God who told Abraham to lie.

The "seed" of Abraham is considered to be his priesthood and the reason for the families of the earth being blessed (Abraham 2:11), whereas the Bible says the seed of Abraham are the children of the promise (Rom. 9:8). People would be blessed by Jesus who would come through the lineage of Isaac (the son promised to Abraham).

"Gods" are said to have created the heavens, the earth, and man (Abraham 4:1, 26-27), but *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual* says, "We know that Jehovah-Christ, assisted by many of the noble and great ones did in fact create the earth and all forms of plant and animal life. But when it came to placing man on earth, there was a change in Creators. That is, the Father himself became personally involved" (p. 18). Do you see the difference?

"Gods" are said to have taken a rib from Adam to form Eve (Abraham 5:16). The Bible says there is only one God.

The Bible reveals Adam and Eve hid in fear after eating from the forbidden tree (Gen. 3:10). But the Pearl of Great Price says their character changed and they actually praised God for their disobedience (Moses 5:9-11).

Adam and Eve are said not to have possessed any joy in the Garden of Eden before the Fall (2 Nephi 2:23), but Eve is said to have possessed a sense of desire and pleasure (joy) before eating the forbidden fruit (Moses 4:12). Also, every tree was pleasant to the sight of Adam (Moses 3:9).

Adam is said to have been the first flesh on the earth (Moses 3:7), but the Bible says animals were created before Adam.

The Book of Mormon teaches man was carnal, sensual, and devilish since the fall of Adam (Mosiah 16:3), but Moses 5:13 says that men became carnal when Adam and Eve's grandchildren began to love Satan more than God. Later on, Moses 6:49 says men became carnal when Satan came and tempted mankind to worship him.

Cain and Abel appear not to have been the only children of Adam and Eve when Abel was murdered. Cain took one of his brothers' daughters to wife. Satan conspired with Cain to kill Abel and made Cain and his brethren swear not to tell anyone about it (Moses 5:2-3, 28-30). But Genesis 4:1-2 shows Cain and Abel were the only children before Abel was murdered.

The Pearl of Great Price records it repented Noah and grieved him at his heart that God had created man (Moses 8:25), whereas the Bible says it repented God and grieved him at his heart that he had created man (Gen. 6:6). God is said to have sent the flood because the wickedness on the earth repented Noah and because wicked people sought to take away his life (Moses 8:26). The Bible teaches the flood came as a result of the violence and corruptness of those on the earth. There is no recorded attempt of murdering Noah in the Bible.

Joseph Smith also incorrectly taught that viewing the bow in the heavens was a sign the Lord would not come that year (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*, 2008, p. 252). Study Genesis 9:12-17 for the correct meaning.

In closing, I pray you will trust the Bible as the word of God.