

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Finding Truth and Salvation in the
Scriptures

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Who are Latter-day Saints?
<http://www.ldslearning.org>

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 9781594678455

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Preface



“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isa. 11:10).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes her prophet and founder Joseph Smith is the root of Jesse; that he would raise up the restored gospel as an ensign to the nations of the earth in preparation for the Lord’s return in the last days.

Let’s spiritually examine this root and the types of fruit that have sprung up from it. Some examples of this fruit are the Book of Mormon, the foundation of the LDS Church, teachings of Joseph Smith and subsequent leaders, published manuals used for training, and church ordinances.

Gospel Principles is such a manual. It contains a general overview of LDS beliefs and practices. Let’s see how the Bible, other Mormon scriptures, and LDS publications compare.

The designation of “Mormons,” “Latter-day Saints,” and “LDS” will be used to refer to the same group of people.

Four books comprise the standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: the Bible (King James Version), the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Introduction



The word “ensign” comes from the Hebrew word “nec.” The prime root of this word is “nacac,” meaning “to gleam from afar.” It can be translated as banner, pole, flag, or standard.

The Bible first uses “ensign” in relation to Moses and the serpents in the desert. As the Israelites were traveling through the wilderness, they murmured against God and Moses. God then sent a plague of serpents that bit the people, causing many to die. Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole. Those looking to the serpent, in faith, were healed (Num. 21:6-9).

Jesus referred to this event when he said, “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” (John 3:14-15).

Recall the parable of the mustard seed: “Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it” (Luke 13:18-19).

Picture the man Joseph Smith being the root of Jesse and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints being symbolic of this tree.

Joseph Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont in 1805. In the morning of an early spring day in 1820, he claimed that two heavenly personages, believed to be God the Father and Jesus Christ, appeared to him. An angel supposedly appeared to Mr. Smith in 1823 and informed him of gold plates, which contained what later would be known as the Book of Mormon. He is said to have received the plates in 1827 and then proceeded to finish the Book of Mormon's publication circa 1830 in Palmyra, New York.

Most Latter-day Saints may understand that the Book of Mormon and their temples are symbolic ensigns (flags), but what about an actual flag? Yes. There is a literal church, a literal Zion, and a literal flag.

LDS Church history reveals evidence that Joseph Smith used flags to unite, rally, defend, and pursue peace. Brigham Young and other leaders of the church also used literal emblems during the supposed restoration of Christ's church.

The *Encyclopedia of LDS History* makes this note: "On 26 July 1847, just two days after Brigham Young arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, he and others ascended a dome-shaped hill north of the present Utah State Capitol building. He had seen this prominent peak in a vision. As President Young raised a flag, he also symbolically lifted the "ensign to all nations" inviting them to gather to Zion. From Ensign Peak the group had an excellent panoramic view of the Salt Lake Valley and surrounding area, the resting place God had designated for his people."

Citizens of the Mormon settlement in Utah commemorated the raising of an ensign on the hill Brigham Young named Ensign Peak. Displaying the flag on this hill for the July 24th celebration in 1849 was an important event.

The LDS flag was displayed by the church when the corner stones of the Salt Lake Temple were laid. It has blue and white stripes, with twelve blue stars encircling a single

larger star. The flag is also referenced in the church song *High On The Mountain Top*.

It is a Mormon article of faith that the Bible is the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

It is up to every believer in Christ to honor him by spreading the message of the true ensign and to avoid trusting false teachers. Expose doctrinal errors where you see them with the light of God’s Word. Bring them to the attention of your pastor or bishop to prevent future generations from being deceived.

Do the LDS gospel which is being preached and the temples which are being built represent the true ensign? Some people say Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God while others say he was deceived by evil spirits disguising themselves as angels of light. To be fair to both sides, we need to examine the teachings of Joseph Smith and those who were influenced by him.

At the time of this writing, the 2009 version of *Gospel Principles* has been published. Many significant teachings from the 1997 edition have been removed so I will focus on the earlier version for a historical perspective.

Let the journey begin ...

1. The Visions



It is believed by Mormons that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith when he was a young boy in the spring of 1820. It was also reported that he was subsequently visited by the angel Moroni three years later.

The official account of these events is reported in the *History of the LDS Church*, volume 1 (http://scriptures.lds.org/en/js_h/1).

The message delivered by the personages of the first vision was that all churches were an abomination and that all Christian professors were corrupt. The eventual announcement of a restored gospel and church is similar to other religious movements such as the Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Joseph Smith viewed the three main Christian denominations in his area (the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians) and their different teachings as signs to prove an apostasy had occurred and that the Bible was unreliable (vv. 6-8, 12). Unfortunately, Latter-day Saints do not apply the same standard to the Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants—as other sects have arisen since the death of Joseph Smith, with different interpretations.

One even finds teachers within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who do not interpret certain scriptural passages the same way.

The personage of the second vision supposedly revealed to Joseph Smith gold plates containing the record of the former inhabitants of the American continent. Joseph Smith was said to have translated what was written on these gold plates into the Book of Mormon. *Gospel Principles* and *Gospel Fundamentals* do not depict the way Joseph Smith is said to have performed the translation.

There are facets about these two visions that have often been overlooked by Mormons.

Joseph Smith writes, “The teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.”

How unfortunate for Joseph Smith in that he lost confidence in the Bible. He soon entered a bout of confusion as reflected in subsequent accounts of his history.

“In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?” (v. 10).

This is an important admission by Joseph Smith. He clearly explains that he entertained thoughts that all the sects were wrong. But then he changes his story when he goes into the woods to pray.

“My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join” (v. 18).

This is an obvious contradiction with verse 10. He explained that he had entertained thoughts that all the sects were wrong, even before going into the woods.

A person is open to all types of deception when he or she does not have confidence in the Bible.

Let’s examine the message of the angel Moroni who is said to have appeared to Joseph Smith three years later.

“He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus: For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

“And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their

fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (vv. 36-39).

Warning bells should be going off in your head. A supposed angel of light appearing and then distorting the message of the Old Testament prophet Malachi—and this angel does it a total of four times (v. 49).

In verse 37, Moroni misquotes the Bible and substitutes the words “for they that shall come shall burn them,” thus altering the meaning.

The Bible records in Malachi, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Moroni misquotes the Bible and substitutes the words “Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet,” thus altering the meaning again.

The Bible records in Malachi, “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Moroni misquotes the Bible and substitutes the words “And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming,” thus altering the meaning again.

Where Moroni misquoted the Bible, a Book of Mormon prophet called Nephi quoted correctly: “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (3 Nephi 25:6). Joseph Smith later disagrees with Moroni and quotes Malachi correctly (D&C 128:17).

Who are Latter-day Saints?

The Book of Mormon, other latter-day scriptures of the Mormon Church, and her teachings are the fruits of these two reported visions.

Before we examine them, let us pay heed to the warning of the apostle Paul—not to receive another Jesus or another gospel from those appearing as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:2-4, 13-15).

2. In the Beginning



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 1-4, Pages 8-24

Our Father in Heaven

There is a God

Page 8 – Alma, a Book of Mormon prophet, wrote, “All things denote there is a God. All the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator.” We can look up at the sky at night and have an idea of what Alma meant.

From the Book of Mormon we see the teaching about the existence of one God.

Alma 11:26-29 records a conversation between Amulek and Zeezrom in which Amulek affirms there is only one God. “And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God?” And Amulek said: “Yea, there is a true and living God.” Now Zeezrom said: “Is there more than one God?” And he answered, “No.” See also Alma 11:44 and Mormon 7:7.

In the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1:6 says, “And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior, for he is full of grace and truth; but there is no God beside me, and all things are present with me, for I know them all.”

Early in his life, Joseph Smith wrote, “We know that there is a God in heaven ... the only living and true God” (D&C 20:17-19).

The Bible is clear as well—there is only one God.

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isa. 43:10). “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isa. 44:6). “Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any” (Isa. 44:8). “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isa. 46:9). See also John 17:3 and 1 Corinthians 8:4.

There are no other Gods.

Joseph Smith did not believe the Bible was sufficient to determine spiritual truth therefore he lost all confidence in appealing to it (*History of the Church*, volume 1, v. 12). Have you suffered the same unfortunate fate as him?

As Joseph Smith grew older and looked into the sky at night, he began to teach about the existence of many Gods. He spoke about a plurality of Gods in his King Follett discourse.

“If Abraham reasoned thus—If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. Hence if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that He had a Father also? I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 373).

“I want your prayers and faith that I may have the instruction of Almighty God and the gift of the Holy Ghost, so that I may set forth things that are true and which can be easily comprehended by you ... but I intend to edify you with the simple truths from heaven. You will then know that I am his servant; for I speak as one having authority” (pp. 354, 357).

If you proceed further with Joseph Smith’s false reasoning, you will see that just as Heavenly Father had billions of spirit children on our planet Earth, so too did the father of Heavenly Father have on his planet. Heavenly Father of this earth is just one of his father’s many spirit children. One could then surmise that Jesus has billions of aunts and uncles, some of whom went on to become gods and goddesses themselves. Who the first God is, and where he came from, is an unanswered mystery to Latter-day Saints.

It is unclear why Mr. Smith taught the existence of many Gods since the Book of Mormon and the Bible both teach about only one God. Let us have a firm hope in the words of the prophet Isaiah.

Joseph Smith's foundational belief that Heavenly Father had a father is found in Revelation 1:6. Unfortunately, he made a mistake in his interpretation because he used the wrong context.

"God and his Father" (v. 6) is a reference to Jesus Christ and his Heavenly Father. The words "he," "his," and "him" all refer to Christ.

Joseph Smith made matters worse by rendering this passage to read, "And hath made us kings and priests unto Heavenly Father and the Father of Heavenly Father. To him be glory." We are not kings and priests unto two different Gods for there is only one God.

Creating an erroneous belief based on an incorrect context is a common mistake. We should be vigilant to never fall into the same trap.

What Kind of Being is God?

Page 9 – God is the Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of all things.

Heavenly Father says in the Pearl of Great Price, "And worlds without number have I created" (Moses 1:33). He created the heavens and they belong to him (v. 37).

But Joseph Smith taught God the Father had a father. This would mean that God the Father didn't create worlds without number and that all the heavens don't belong to him.

Elder Bruce McConkie of the LDS Church wrote, “Further, as the Prophet also taught, there is a God above the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 322).

Do you see the predicament they placed themselves into?

Page 9 – God’s body is perfected and glorified.

Joseph Smith taught Heavenly Father is a resurrected being who provided an atonement for the people of another planet.

“The answer is obvious—in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? To lay down my life as my Father did, and take it up again” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 346). “I want you to pay particular attention to what I am saying. Jesus said that the Father wrought precisely in the same way as His Father had done before Him. As the Father had done before? He laid down His life, and took it up the same as His Father had done before ... I know it is good reasoning” (p. 373).

If Heavenly Father provided an atonement for those on his planet, where did Heavenly Mother come from? Did her husband cleanse her of sins on his cross?

The sixth president of the LDS Church also taught Heavenly Father is a resurrected being: “[Jesus Christ] ... of His unique status in the flesh as the offspring of a mortal mother and of an immortal, or resurrected and glorified Father” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, p. 356).

Elder Bruce McConkie said, “God the Father is a perfected, glorified, holy Man, an immortal Personage” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 742).

Was the Mormon Heavenly Father always a sinless being if he needed to become perfected? If not, could someone who needed a redeemer be a redeemer himself? Consider all the other spirit brothers of Heavenly Father that exist in LDS theology. Let’s suppose he atoned for them and they went on to become the Heavenly Fathers of their own worlds, where they were subsequently worshipped by their own spirit children. That would entail their spirit children worshipping Gods who were not always sinless beings. Wouldn’t they also feel that they were worshipping a God who never needed to be saved from sin? Would that make you right and them wrong? If you cannot accept that the Mormon Heavenly Father of planet Earth was not always sinless, why would you expect any different from those who worship their Heavenly Father on other planets?

Do you see the dilemma caused by this teaching of Joseph Smith?

Page 9 – Everything that he does is to help his children become like him—a god. He has said, “Behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Becoming a god is Heavenly Father’s plan for each individual in LDS theology. But no deity is implied when you honestly look at Moses 1:39.

Latter-day Saints have not explained why we need to be adopted into God’s family if we already are the literal offspring of Heavenly Father. People fail to realize that those

who are not led by the Spirit of God are not his children (Rom. 8:14-16). Paul is speaking to believers in Christ, not to unbelievers as Latter-day Saints assume.

Also, 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 says, “I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Why do you need to become a son and daughter of Almighty God if you already were in some pre-mortal life?

You need to have the proper context of these verses otherwise you will not understand what Jesus meant when he called some Jews the spiritual sons of the devil (John 8:44; Matt. 23:15). Paul also taught we are the spiritual children of wrath by nature (Eph. 2:3).

A former president of the LDS Church taught, “We are gods in embryo, and thus have an unlimited potential for progress and attainment ... I want an America which cherishes the spark of celestial fire—freedom, faith, conscience—which has been planted in the heart of every one of us” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp. 21, 584).

He had another positive outlook on man’s inward being when he wrote, “By nature man wants to find God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth” (p. 67).

A magazine published by the LDS Church says, “Relief Society helps each sister learn that ... she has a divine nature” (“Emphasizing the Divine Worth of Each Sister,” *Ensign*, April 2006, p. 64). “Man has in himself the seeds of godhood, which can germinate and grow and develop. As the acorn becomes the oak, the mortal man becomes a god” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Doctrines of the Gospel*, 1986, p. 52).

Contrary to this, a Book of Mormon prophet said, “For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be ... unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).

Are we not rather “sinners in embryo” because of our sin nature? If we subject ourselves to sin, we have unlimited potential to produce more sin and degenerate even further.

One may consider the fact that when Adam and Eve were created, they were already immortal and possessed eternal life. Adam and Eve were perfect when they were created—but they were not gods.

Joseph Smith gave a revelation that immortality and eternal life is not associated with becoming a god but rather is connected to baptism: “Herein is glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life—The ordinance of baptism by water” (D&C 128:12).

He taught Heavenly Father progressed from a non-deity to a God: “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*, 2008, p. 40).

Heavenly Father was once a man who lived on an earth, overcame problems, passed through several stages, and climbed his “ladder,” starting from the bottom to the top, until he became a God (*Gospel Fundamentals*, p. 204; “The Father and the Son,” *Ensign*, April 2002, p. 18).

“As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be” (Lorenzo Snow, fifth president of the LDS Church).

Joseph Smith taught Heavenly Father is not eternal: “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” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 345). These words of Joseph Smith have disappeared from the 2008 version.

“Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing” (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, 1945, p 104).

It is incomprehensible why Joseph Smith and other Mormon prophets have taught and continue to teach this when the Bible and LDS scriptures have clearer insights into the matter.

“And God spake unto Moses, saying; behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless?” (Moses 1:3).

“For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity” (Moroni 8:18).

“By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them” (D&C 20:17).

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen” (Ps. 41:13; 90:2; 93:2).

Our Heavenly Family

We Are Children of Our Heavenly Father

Page 11 – All men and women are literally the sons and daughters of Deity. Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal [physical] body.

Latter-day Saints believe all humans born on earth were already sons and daughters of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother in a celestial home before they came to earth.

Later on, we'll learn Joseph Smith believed men existed as eternal intelligences. So it may be more appropriate to say Latter-day Saints believe in being adopted and placed into spirit-created bodies.

Who is Jesus?

Page 11 – The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ (see D&C 93:21), so he is literally our elder brother.

This is a very important difference between Mormonism and Christianity. Joseph Smith believed Jesus always existed as an intelligence, then somehow he became a spirit child of a celestial marriage, and later progressed into a god by some means in the spirit world. This is not biblical teaching however. John 1:1-14 says Jesus is and has always been God. This same God came among humans in the form of a man but he did not cease to be God.

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The word “eternal” is defined as meaning “everlasting, without beginning or end” (*Gospel Principles*, p. 378). Jesus is called the Eternal God (2 Nephi 26:12) and is described as the Lord Omnipotent, from all eternity to all eternity (Mosiah 3:5-8).

Think of Jesus as the “without beginning or end” God, not as some procreated spirit child. The Bible teaches Jesus is the Almighty God (Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17).

But an LDS teaching has Jesus progressing into a God: “By obedience and devotion to the truth he [Jesus] attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 10).

Does the LDS Church’s version of Jesus sound like the “eternal” or “everlasting” God to you? Does placing your faith in such a person save you? How about putting your faith in a Jesus who is taught by some to be only a great prophet or teacher? Do you heed Paul’s warning not to receive those who preach a different Jesus (2 Cor. 11:3-4)?

Among those Mormons who believe Jesus became a God, there is even confusion on when he did so. Was it before he came to earth or after his resurrection?

“It is not hard to believe that God was once a man when we realize that Christ was a man and became a God” (Dr. David Pressley Bowman, *I Have An Answer*, p. 93).

Unfortunately, these people do not believe in their own Book of Mormon teaching that God came to earth as a man (Mosiah 7:27; 13:33-34).

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 John 1:7).

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 1:19; 2:9). Jesus was also worshipped at birth (Matt. 2:11).

Joseph Smith taught Jesus did not have a fulness when he was born in Bethlehem: “And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness. And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first” (D&C 93:13-14). This was his reason for Jesus being called the Son of God. Joseph Smith made an error and misinterpreted John 1:14-16.

This statement of not initially being full of grace contradicts the way Joseph Smith translated several portions of the Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price. Jesus is said to be full of grace and truth. He did not have to attain it (Moses 1:6, 32; 5:7; 6:52; 7:11; 2 Nephi 2:6; Alma 5:48; 9:26).

The Book of Mormon even has other peculiar teachings about Jesus. He is called both the Father and the Son, but Jesus was called the Son because he dwelt in the flesh (Mosiah 15:2-4). The Father and the Son is one God, not two Gods.

Page 11 – We are the spiritual children of our heavenly parents.

The LDS Church teaches God the Father is married to at least one woman in heaven.

“This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) when in speaking of pre-existence and the origin of man, they said that man as a spirit was begotten and born of heavenly parents and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516; *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*).

Latter-day Saints attempt to prove their theory of pre-existence from the Bible by using Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Jeremiah.

Job 15:7 is not about pre-existent spirits. It is a conversation where Eliphaz asks Job, “Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?”

Job 38:4-7 is a rhetorical question posed by God to Job: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.” Job was not there when God laid the foundations.

Proverbs 8:23-30 is not Solomon speaking about himself. A woman, symbolized as wisdom, is talking. Solomon is narrating her speech (vv. 1-3, 12). Wisdom and folly are contrasted as two women in Proverbs 9 as well.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 says the spirit will return unto God who gave it, but this is contrary to Abraham 3:18—which says spirits are co-eternal with God.

Jeremiah 1:5 says God knew Jeremiah—it does not say Jeremiah knew God. This is a big difference because the omniscient God has foreknowledge. Likewise, Heavenly Father knew about Christ’s sacrificial atonement before it

actually happened, but Christ was not crucified in a time believed to refer to the pre-existence.

Romans 8:14 states, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” If you are not led by his Spirit, you are not considered his son. Jesus even referred to some as the children of the devil.

Page 13 – The scriptures teach us that the prophets prepared themselves to become leaders on earth while they were still spirits in heaven.

No. We were called, “not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9).

Page 14 – If we passed our tests, we would receive the fulness of joy that our heavenly parents have received.

The Mormon version of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother received their fulness of joy (exaltation, eternal life – 3 Nephi 28:10; D&C 76:59; 84:38) through their heavenly parents in turn. Let’s call them Christ’s grandfather (a god) and grandmother (a goddess) for lack of better terms.

Our Heavenly Father Presented a Plan for Us to Become like Him

The LDS Church teaches Heavenly Father organized a council in heaven where he presented a plan to show how individuals could progress into gods.

Page 14 – Since we could not progress further in heaven, our Heavenly Father called a Grand Council to present his plan for our progression. We learned that if we followed his

plan, we would become like him. We would have all power in heaven and on earth; we would become heavenly parents and have spirit children just as he does.

There were other Gods called to this council according to Joseph Smith: “I want to let you know that the Holy Ghost knows something as well as you do. The head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world. The grand councilors sat at the head in yonder heavens and contemplated the creation of the worlds which were created at the time” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, pp. 348-349; D&C 121:32).

The LDS Church teaches some members will become heavenly parents themselves and have spirit children. Faithful Mormons will some day be the objects of worship by the spirit children they procreate. The belief that Latter-day Saints will one day be worshipped as gods is more fully covered in chapter 47 of *Gospel Principles*. Joseph Smith taught some people would be glorified to have the same power as God himself in the resurrection: “And he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion” (D&C 76:95).

Jesus Christ, our Chosen Leader and Savior

A Savior and Leader Was Needed

Page 17 – When the plan for our salvation was presented to us in the spirit world, we were so happy that we shouted for joy (see Job 38:7). Two of our brothers offered to help.

The LDS Church teaches Lucifer (Satan) is the spirit brother of Jesus as well as your brother too. “Jesus Christ is essentially greater than any and all others by reason of His seniority

as the oldest or firstborn” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, p. 356). Older means greater?

Page 17 – We needed a savior to pay for our sins and teach us how to return to our Heavenly Father. Our Father said, “Whom shall I send?” Jesus and Satan offered to help. Our oldest brother Jesus said, “Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27).

Both Jesus and Lucifer offered to redeem mankind according to Mormon theology.

This reference of Jesus as our eldest brother is also found earlier on page 11 of *Gospel Principles*. A link to Doctrine and Covenants 93:21 was provided.

It may be foreign to some people but the Bible refers to Israel and Ephraim as the “firstborn” (Exo. 4:22; Jer. 31:9). I wonder if Latter-day Saints would consider Ephraim or Israel their oldest brother? “Firstborn” does not always mean “first born” in the procreative sense either. It means preeminence.

The War in Heaven

When did this war occur?

Page 19 – Because we are here on earth and have mortal bodies, we know that we chose to follow Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father. Satan and all his followers were expelled from the presence of God.

The LDS Church teaches that because Heavenly Father chose Jesus Christ to be our savior at this council of heaven,

Satan became angry and rebelled. There was a war in heaven long ago.

The Book of Revelation records a series of visions God gave to the apostle John. “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass ... for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:1-3).

The war is a future occurrence. It is described in Revelation chapter 12. The “great red dragon” (representing Satan) is cast down to earth and he is no longer able to accuse the brethren before God day and night.

The LDS Church teaches this war in heaven occurred after the council in heaven but Satan was not accusing anyone before God prior to the council in heaven.

“And they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death” (Rev. 12:11). Adam and Eve did not overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb because Jesus was not yet crucified. Adam and Eve loved not their lives unto death since Satan did not kill them for their testimony.

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (v. 12). If Mormon teachings are correct in that the war in heaven happened just after this council of heaven, there was no earth as of yet, and thus no inhabitants.

LDS theology tells us Satan caused a great rebellion when his plan was rejected by God. All the spirits who followed him were cast down from heaven. *Gospel Principles* writes,

“They are around us, tempting us and enticing us to do things that are not pleasing to our Heavenly Father” (p. 19). They are invisible.

But the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith revealed that we could detect a false spirit by three grand keys—the handshakes (D&C 129:4-9). How can you ask the devil to shake your hand when you cannot see this evil and invisible spirit because your eyes are impure (D&C 131:7-8)?

He taught something different at another point in his life: “God has so ordained that when He has communicated, no vision is to be taken but what you see by the seeing of the eye, or what you hear by the hearing of the ear. When you see a vision, pray for the interpretation; if you get not this, shut it up; there must be certainty in this matter. An open vision will manifest that which is more important” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 161).

It is unclear whether prayer or the three grand keys was more important to Joseph Smith in determining a true or false spirit.

One can detect a false messenger by comparing the message with the Bible.

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (2 Cor. 11:3-4).

The apostle Paul was warning about false teachers. Beware of anyone who preaches another Jesus or gospel.

We Have the Savior's Teachings to Follow

Page 19 – He taught the plan of salvation and exaltation by his word and by the way he lived.

If you study the words of Jesus in the Bible, he did not teach we could become exalted to godhood (Matt. 22:29-30).

Freedom To Choose

Page 21 – The right to choose between good and evil is called agency.

Agency is an Eternal Principle

Page 21 – In the premortal life we were free agents. That means we had the power to act for ourselves (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29-30).

Page 22 – We began to make choices as spirit children in our Heavenly Father's presence. Our choices there made us worthy to come to earth.

One of these choices supposedly was to follow Jesus at the council in heaven.

If you look at the official web site of the LDS Church (www.lds.org, Basic Beliefs -> Purpose of Life), coming to earth was a necessity so you could "receive a physical body,

exercise agency, learn to choose between good and evil, and to learn and gain experience that will help you become more like your Heavenly Father. This time on Earth provides opportunities for you to grow and progress.”

What do Latter-day Saints really believe? Was coming to earth a reward for being worthy in heaven or was it a necessity in order to progress further in a physical body on earth?

Page 23 – We cannot choose unless the opposites of good and evil are placed before us.

Latter-day Saints believe they existed as spirits with Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father in heaven. They made choices during their time there. The choices they made were between the opposites of good and evil that were placed before them. They could not progress further so they had to come to earth to gain additional testing. Mormons teach that these spirits in heaven, who are waiting to come to earth to take on human bodies, are using their agency to make choices between good and evil in their celestial home in the presence of God.

What types of evil exist in the Mormon heaven for choices to be made upon?

Latter-day scriptures paint a confusing picture of agency.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:39 says, “And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet.”

How were the spirit children of God able to be agents unto themselves in the premortal existence without the devil tempting them? Or was he?

There is a teaching in the Basic Beliefs section of the LDS Church's web site at www.mormon.org. See the subsection called "Agency and the Fall of Adam and Eve." It says, "*They had moral agency, or the ability to choose between good and evil, which made it possible for them to learn and progress.*" The web page about "Heavenly Father's Plan of Happiness" states, "*God influences you to do good and to follow him, while Satan tempts you to ignore God and commit sin.*"

LDS theology teaches Adam and Eve needed to fall so they could learn, progress, and have children.

Major problems arise in their theology as evident by certain questions.

What was the first choice between good and evil in the Garden? Did Adam and Eve choose to follow God in disobeying him or did they choose to follow Satan in obeying him? Do you need to learn and progress by always obeying God or does he want you to both obey and disobey him to learn? Should we always follow the example of Christ's obedience?

It seems LDS theology teaches Adam and Eve chose good (i.e. chose wisely) in disobeying God because they could not learn and progress without first becoming mortal. That is why Mormons honour Eve in the role she played. The entire plan of the Mormon god would have been thwarted if Adam and Eve lived in obedience. The Mormon god knew it would happen—he wanted it to happen because his plan depended on it.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:30 then says, "All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence."

Who are Latter-day Saints?

This passage tells us that all truth has agency otherwise it does not exist. Doctrine and Covenants 93:29 equates man with uncreated intelligence or the light of truth. Thus, man is eternal with eternal agency. Reading further, verse 33 shows “man is spirit.” And when you read Abraham 3:18, you will see that spirits are eternal; one more intelligent than another. In simple terms, people are eternal spirits (intelligences) with eternal agency. They would not exist if this were not so. But Moses 7:32, in the Pearl of Great Price, says God gave man his agency in the Garden of Eden—and Moses 4:3 says God gave mankind his agency before they are said to have come down to earth. Are you confused?

Intelligences (who are believed by Mormons to have been organized into spirit children of their heavenly parents) were able to act for themselves (they had agency) always and eternally even before Lucifer was formed as their spirit brother. Intelligences would have no existence if this was not the case according to Joseph Smith (D&C 93:30).

The Book of Mormon says God created “all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:14), but later teaches that men placed themselves in a state to act after transgressing the first commandments (Alma 12:31).

Do you see another dilemma? Since the Mormon God did not create the eternal intelligences (who already had their agency), who is the “all” that he is said to have created to act or be acted upon?

3. Creation



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 5-6, Pages 27-34

The Creation

Who Created the Earth for Us?

Page 27 – Jesus created this world and everything in it. He also created many other worlds.

Where was man when God created the earth?

“Before humans came to earth, they participated in all the councils of heaven. We sang together with the heavenly hosts for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, p. 332).

The Bible teaches we were not around at the beginning of creation. God posed the rhetorical question to Job: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?” (Job 38:4). Neither Job nor Adam was there to see when he created the earth.

Carrying Out the Creation

Page 28 – Our spirits would be given bodies of flesh and blood so they could live on earth.

But the LDS Church teaches Adam and Eve did not have blood in their veins when they were created on earth (see <http://scriptures.lds.org/bdf/flldm>).

The Fall of Adam and Eve

Adam and Eve Were the First to Come to Earth

Is God the author of sin?

Page 31 – Adam and Eve were chosen to be the first people to live on the earth (see Moses 1:34).

“As God intended man to become as He, it was necessary that He should first make him free” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 10). Disobedience to Heavenly Father made them free according to LDS teachings. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). Satan did not make Adam and Eve free when they sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Were Adam and Eve foreordained to sin?

Page 31 – Adam and Eve were foreordained to become the parents of the human race.

The Bible does not teach Adam and Eve had to sin in order to have children.

Is it reasonable to believe Adam and Eve could not obey God's commandment to be fruitful and multiply until they broke his other commandment to not eat from the forbidden tree?

How many commandments did Adam and Eve disobey to cause the Fall? The Bible tells us it was only one.

We see contradictory teachings when we examine the Book of Mormon and LDS Church material: "Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandments, they were separated from His presence (this separation is also called spiritual death) and became mortal" (*Plan of Salvation*, p. 18). "Spiritual death is separation from God as a result of disobeying His commandments" (p. 19). "Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal" (Alma 12:31).

The Garden of Eden

Page 32 – When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, they were not yet mortal. They were not able to have children.

God required Adam and Eve to disobey him so they could become mortal and gain the ability to have children according to the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 2:25) and Pearl of Great Price (Moses 5:11).

On September 23 1995, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued an article called, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

Mormon president Gordon B. Hinckley said, “The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife.”

Take note of the key word “potential.”

If the first commandment pertained to their potential to have children, did the second commandment also pertain to their potential to eat?

Didn't Adam and Eve have the ability to obey both of God's commandments? What about the plants and animals? Did the commandment given to them also pertain to their potential? Did the plants and animals gain the ability to procreate when Adam and Eve did?

Genesis 4:1 says, “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.” Notice that it wasn't sin that allowed her to have children but rather it was a blessing from the Lord. God does not reward sin. The Mormon belief is that God blessed Eve for her disobedience when she ate from the forbidden tree (Moses 5:11).

Page 32 – The changes that came upon Adam and Eve because they ate the fruit are called the Fall.

Notice that the focus of the word “Fall” is not on disobedience to God but rather on a physical change in their bodies. “The forbidden fruit had the power to create blood ... and all things became mortal” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 9).

The thought of becoming a deity appealed to Eve and she disobeyed God when tempted by the serpent. Have you succumbed to the same temptation?

Adam and Eve's Separation from God

Page 33 – Their physical condition changed as a result of their eating the forbidden fruit. As God had promised, they became mortal. They were able to have children. Because Satan had introduced evil into the world, Adam and Eve and their children were separated from God both physically and spiritually.

Adam and Eve could not obey God's command to be fruitful and multiply until they disobeyed his other commandment to not eat from the forbidden tree. Does this make sense to you?

The Book of Mormon tells us Satan is the author of sin (Helaman 6:30) and that Adam and Eve were separated from God both physically and spiritually when they disobeyed him in the Garden of Eden (Alma 42:9). Can any Latter-day Saint doubt Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden? How do you think Satan introduced evil into the world?

Great Blessings Resulted from the Transgression

This heading is contradicted by another LDS Church teaching—all blessings are predicated on obedience, not transgression (D&C 130:20-21; *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 46).

Page 33 – Some people believe that Adam and Eve committed a serious sin when they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, latter-day scriptures help us understand that their fall was a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us.

This is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. God does not reward sin nor does he give blessings to people because of their sins. But the LDS Church teaches God blesses someone for his or her transgression. Because Adam and Eve sinned, Latter-day Saints believe God blessed their disobedience with the ability to obey his command to be fruitful and multiply. Adam and Eve, like the plants and animals, already had the ability to obey God's command to be fruitful and multiply before the Fall according to the Bible.

“We celebrate Eve’s act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode, called the Fall ... We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 13).

The apostle Paul did not view Eve’s actions as honourable (2 Cor. 11:3).

If the Fall was such a great blessing, why does *Gospel Principles* say, “Because Satan had introduced evil into the world, Adam and Eve and their children were separated from God both physically and spiritually” (p. 33)? Why isn’t the introduction of evil into the world also a great blessing like the LDS belief in Eve gaining the ability to have children?

Have you ever wondered why God reacted the way he did when Adam and Eve disobeyed? Heavenly Father pronounced judgment on them, the serpent, and the earth.

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field” (Gen. 3:14).

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (v. 16).

Notice that it doesn't say God would add conception to Eve.

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (vv. 17-19).

“Rather than a curse upon Adam, it was a blessing to him” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 14).

Does Adam working by the sweat of his brow and dealing with thorns and thistles (as opposed to the conditions in the Garden of Eden) sound like a blessing to you? Can one honestly accept that the earth was cursed because of the Fall and then immediately turn around and say the Fall and the expulsion from the Garden is a blessing to Adam and Eve? Do you believe God ever blesses someone when they use their agency to follow a temptation of the devil?

“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken” (vv. 23-24).

All these actions by Heavenly Father reveal he was angry at their disobedience. If their fall was such a great blessing to all of us like the LDS Church teaches, God should have been overjoyed for them fulfilling their part of the plan.

One thing overlooked by some people is that the plants and animals suffered mortality because of the Fall too. The earth is also viewed by some as a living organism created by God. It too suffered the consequences of Adam and Eve’s transgression.

What does the LDS Church teach the great blessings of their disobedience are?

Page 33 – Because of the Fall, we are blessed with physical bodies, the right to choose between good and evil, and the opportunity to gain eternal life.

But earlier it was said that when Adam and Eve were created on earth, their spirits “were given bodies of flesh and bones so they could live on earth” (p. 28). This was before the Fall. By the way, couldn’t they live on earth without bodies of flesh and bones just as they were believed to be living in heaven with spirit bodies?

Then on page 33, we see that “their physical condition changed as a result of their eating the forbidden fruit.” Did they have a physical body or a spiritual body before the Fall? If Adam and Eve received a physical body after eating from the forbidden tree, did they eat spiritual or physical fruit? If Adam and Eve already had a physical body before the Fall,

how is it because of the Fall that they were blessed with physical bodies? Were the animals spiritual or physical in the Garden of Eden initially? Are you confused?

Gospel Principles says Adam and Eve were free agents in the pre-mortal life (p. 21). They already had the power to act for themselves and choose between good and evil there (D&C 93:29-30). Adam and Eve had the right to choose between obedience and disobedience and they possessed physical bodies before the Fall according to the Bible. They already had eternal life before they sinned and they lost this blessing when they disobeyed God. He then had to redeem Adam and Eve.

Page 34 – Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy (2 Nephi 2:22-25). Before the Fall, they were having no joy, doing no good.

Wouldn't it be more appropriate to say "Jesus is, that men might have joy?" Did Adam sin in the Garden of Eden? Do Latter-day Saints believe in original sin?

There is some difference of opinion on this matter. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, "It is proper and according to the scriptural pattern to speak of the transgression of Adam, but not the sin of Adam" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 804). Joseph F. Smith said, "He [mankind] dies in consequence of the sin of Adam" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, p. 89).

1 John 3:4 declares that sin is the transgression of the law.

Joseph Fielding Smith said, "I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin ... This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin ... for it was

something that Adam and Eve had to do” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 13). Unfortunately, he was in disagreement with 1 John 3:4 and with some other Latter-day Saints who adhere to the biblical teaching on this matter. Doesn’t it make you wonder how a Mormon prophet can teach false doctrine and yet remain in his position? Why didn’t other Latter-day Saints correct him?

Adam and Eve had to disobey and obey God at the same time? Are you confused?

Bruce R. McConkie further stated, “Knowledge of good and evil is an essential element in the commission of sin” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 804). But transgression of a law is an essential element in committing sin (Alma 42:17).

Even *Gospel Fundamentals* teaches Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden: “We sin when we do the things God has told us not to do” (p. 67).

Do you believe God ordained the atonement because he knew sin would arise or do you believe he ordained sin because he knew the need for the atonement would arise? In other words, did the atonement cause the eventual need for sin on earth or did sin cause the eventual need for the atonement?

The Book of Mormon reveals Adam and Eve were punished by being expelled from the Garden of Eden because of their sin: “And now, my son, I perceive there is somewhat more which doth worry your mind, which ye cannot understand— which is concerning the justice of God in the punishment of the sinner; for ye do try to suppose that it is injustice that the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery” (Alma 42:1-2).

God forgave Adam for that sin of disobedience: “Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water? And the Lord said unto Adam: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden. Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God had atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children” (Moses 6:53). Original guilt means original sin in this sense. The fall of Adam and his repentance are associated with sin (Alma 22:12-14; D&C 109:34).

“Now, how could a man repent except he should sin? How could he sin if there was no law? How could there be a law save there was a punishment?” (Alma 42:17).

God’s law was to not eat from the forbidden tree. The punishment was spiritual death, expulsion, and eventually physical death. The sinners were Adam and Eve.

How is mankind considered fallen?

Book of Mormon prophets differ from Joseph Smith on this matter. He wrote, “By the transgression of these holy laws man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man” (D&C 20:20). But Mosiah 3:11 says mankind was considered fallen because of Adam’s transgression, not through men’s transgression of holy laws. Mosiah 3:19 also states that natural man has been an enemy of God since the fall of Adam and not since transgressing holy laws (see also Alma 12:22). Our natures are considered evil because of the Fall (Ether 3:2).

“The fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal, that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death” (Alma 42:9).

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Joseph Smith taught mankind was redeemed from the Fall before reaching the age of reason (D&C 29:46; 93:38) but a Book of Mormon prophet taught mankind was redeemed from the Fall through Christ's atonement: "Adam fell that men might be ... And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall" (2 Nephi 2:25-26).

The Bible says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (v. 14). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (v. 19).

Why didn't Joseph Smith believe biblical teachings?

4. The American Eden



Very few people realize that the land of Missouri, in the United States of America, is very precious real estate to the LDS Church.

First reason: LDS president Heber C. Kimball said, “The spot chosen for the Garden of Eden was Jackson County, in the state of Missouri, where Independence now stands; it was occupied in the morn of creation by Adam” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 10; D&C 116:1; 117:8-14).

The land of Eden is not described as Missouri (Gen. 2:10-14).

Second reason: Jackson County is the land chosen for the Latter-day Saints to build their city of New Jerusalem before the second coming of Christ. See Article of Faith #10.

LDS theology gives the term “Zion” five main designations:

- (a) the pure in heart (D&C 97:21).
- (b) the city of God (D&C 97:19).
- (c) the city of New Jerusalem [Independence, Missouri] and spot for the temple (D&C 57:1-4).

(d) the land of Zion and place of gathering (D&C 45:43; 45:71; 63:36; 82:12; 101:20).

(e) a place of peace and refuge for the saints before calamity strikes the earth (D&C 45:42, 66-69; 124:10).

The size of Zion grew as time passed for Joseph Smith.

“You know there has been a great discussion in relation to Zion—where it is, and where the gathering of the dispensation is ... The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south, and is described by the Prophets, who declare that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 362).

The Bible teaches the land of Zion is the land of Israel. Old and New Testament prophets did not mention America.

“Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David” (2 Sam. 5:7). “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:6). “But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved” (Ps. 78:68). “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion” (Ps. 137:1). “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt” (Isa. 10:24).

The Latter-day Saints initially began with great hope in their Zion. They believed the Lord gave them promises of safety, blessing, and residence in Missouri. “For she [Zion] will not be moved out of her place. I, the Lord, have spoken it” (D&C 90:37). “If Zion do these things she shall prosper, and spread herself and become very glorious, very great and

very terrible ... surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place” (D&C 97:18-19). “Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her” (D&C 64:41).

Several revelations were given to purchase lands to build up and expand Zion (D&C 42:35; 57:4; 58:49-52). The saints were even commanded to be equal in all material things because otherwise they would be failing to keep the law of their God (D&C 51:3, 13; 70:14; 78:5-6).

Joseph Smith taught the gathering to Missouri was a heavenly commandment and one of the main responsibilities of elders as they preached the gospel.

“And first, it becomes an Elder when he is traveling through the world, warning the inhabitants of the earth to gather together, that they may be built up an holy city unto the Lord. In speaking of the gathering, we mean to be understood as speaking of it according to scripture, the gathering of the elect of the Lord out of every nation on earth, and bringing them to the place of the Lord of Hosts, when the city of righteousness shall be built, and where the people shall be of one heart and one mind, when the Savior comes” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, pp. 86, 93).

The blessings upon their Zion would be based on their willingness to obey God’s commandments (D&C 130:21).

Unfortunately, great apostasy swept through Mormonism and squashed the dream of Zion.

They received false spirits and thought them to be of God (D&C 50:1-15, 31-32 – May 1831). The Latter-day Saints rebelled against the truth and took pleasure in unrighteousness (D&C 56:14-15 – June 1831). Adultery persisted among

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the Latter-day Saints (D&C 63:14 – August 1831). Teachers were not able to find this iniquity in the church (D&C 20:53). They were not led by the spirit of the Lord.

There were many who didn't observe the commandments (D&C 63:22 – August 1831). They failed to receive blessings because of fear in their hearts (D&C 67:3, 10-13 – November 1831). The whole church was condemned (D&C 84:54-55 – September 1832).

The Mormons were chastened for the grievous sin of failing to build a house unto the Lord (D&C 95:1-6 – June 1833). Many of the saints in Kirtland had not forsaken their covetousness, pride, and other detestable things (D&C 98:19-20 – August 1833).

Many saints in Jackson County were driven from their homes in consequence of their transgressions, envyings, strifes, and lustful desires. Apostasy had prevented them from dwelling in their land of Zion (D&C 101:1-8, 100 – December 1833). The church (God's people) would have already been redeemed by then were it not for their transgressions (D&C 105:2 – June 1834).

They prayed for their protection and for the Kirtland Temple to always stand. They failed to obey God. He lifted his protection and the Kirtland Temple was burned in 1848. Those in Zion apostatized and the promises to them were revoked (D&C 109:11-12 – March 1836).

Thomas Marsh prayed for the Twelve and sharply admonished them for their sins. They needed to be converted. They were told not to rebel against Joseph Smith (D&C 112:12-15 – July 1837).

Due to the failure of many to abide the law of consecration, the Lord is said to have withdrawn it and substituted the law of tithing instead (D&C 119 – July 1838). Apostasy caused the saints to be moved out of their place (D&C 124:45-46 – January 1841).

LDS member Almon Babbit even set up a golden calf for the people to worship (D&C 124:84 – January 1841). Some Mormons would be quick to say that this was only a figurative calf and not a real one, but the apostasy must have been really severe if they used the imagery of the Israelite rebellion at Mount Sinai. The Book of Mormon even says that such transgressions of God's people could overthrow the church Jesus is said to have established (Mosiah 27:13)–if you can believe that.

The Latter-day Saints had to be admonished for their evil speech and drunkenness even during their trek to Utah (D&C 136:23-24 – January 1847).

A strange admonishment of the “Lord” is given in the same month. They are told to be diligent in keeping the commandments otherwise their enemies would have triumphed over them. The “Lord” seems to have forgotten that their enemies had already triumphed over them about ten years earlier when they were being forced out of Missouri (D&C 136:42 – January 1847).

Even the prophet Joseph Smith was not immune from transgression and weakness (D&C 3:6, 12-14; 5:21; 10:1-9, 36-37; 20:5; 35:19; 50:15).

The *Plan of Salvation* says, “Because of apostasy, people lose knowledge of the gospel. Priesthood authority is taken from among them” (p. 4). How many Latter-day Saints

would honestly judge themselves, in light of their own teachings, and view their own apostasy as proof of a disappeared priesthood?

“This [Great Apostasy] resulted in the formation of many churches with conflicting teachings” (*Plan of Salvation*, p. 8). If these are signs of great apostasy, the many sects of Mormonism would also prove the original LDS Church suffered the same fate.

A December 1833 revelation recorded that Jackson County would be the only place appointed for the gathering of the saints. When there was no more room in this place, the “Lord” would appoint other places so the borders of Zion could be enlarged (D&C 82:14; 101:20-21).

But a strange thing happened in the psychology and revelation of the Latter-day Saints. Three years later, in March 1836, Joseph Smith offered a prayer in Kirtland where he desired that other places be appointed for the gathering (D&C 109:59).

The original decree of the “Lord” to gather to Jackson County until there was no more room to gather there had not been obeyed, but nevertheless they began to ask God to alter his original design.

Joseph Smith is said to have received a revelation giving the official name of the new church in April 1838. Even though the saints were being scattered from Jackson County, the Lord apparently said to continue gathering upon the land of Zion and upon her other stakes. The city of Far West was consecrated as the most holy (D&C 115:4-7).

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Earlier in March 1836, the missionaries were instructed to gather the new believers from other cities and to bring them into the land of Zion or to her other stakes (D&C 109:39).

In October 1838, the city of Nauvoo was appointed as another city of safety and refuge (D&C 124:109). It is said that the Nauvoo House would be possessed by Joseph Smith and his progeny from generation to generation and that his blessing would be poured out on his posterity after him. It is reported that the Lord pronounced a blessing on Joseph and his seed in that the kindreds of the earth would be blessed through them (D&C 124:56-58). Instead of a blessing, judgment awaits those who proclaim a false Jesus.

In March 1841, it was revealed to Joseph Smith to build up other cities for the saints to gather to. One of these would be situated near Nauvoo and be called Zarahemla—after a Book of Mormon city (D&C 125:2-3).

Speaking about the murder and other oppressions against the saints, Joseph wrote, “Which dark and blackening deeds are enough to make hell itself shudder, and to stand aghast and pale, and the hands of the very devil to tremble and palsy” (D&C 123:7, 9-10).

What happened to these people is very despicable but let’s not exaggerate something to the point where it becomes a lie. The devil never even trembled during the atrocities of Hitler, Pol Pot, or Stalin—and he was ultimately responsible for it.

Other revelations were said to have been given to Joseph Smith to rally the saints.

Joseph Smith was said to be the Moses-like figure who would recapture the lands of consecration by armed combat: “Verily, verily I say unto you, that my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., is the man to whom I likened the servant to whom the Lord of the vineyard spake in the parable which I have given unto you” (D&C 103:21).

The web site <http://scriptures.lds.org> makes a reference for this passage to Doctrine and Covenants 101:44-55.

“A certain nobleman had a spot of land, very choice; and he said unto his servants: Go ye unto my vineyard, even upon this very choice piece of land, and plant twelve olive-trees; And the lord of the vineyard said unto one of his servants: Go and gather together the residue of my servants, and take all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, my young men, and they that are of middle age also among all my servants, who are the strength of mine house, save those only whom I have appointed to tarry.”

It should be worth noting a few verses that were left out.

“And go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard; for it is mine; I have bought it with money” (D&C 101:56).

Jesus did not buy his vineyard with money. Jesus, not Joseph Smith, is the redeemer.

“Therefore, get ye straightway unto my land; break down the walls of mine enemies; throw down their tower, and scatter their watchmen. And inasmuch as they gather together against you, avenge me of mine enemies, that by and by I may come with the residue of mine house and possess the land” (D&C 101:57-58; 103:11-36).

The biblical Jesus did not command us to avenge him of his enemies. The Mormon Jesus did.

We know this revelation was not fulfilled. But given the current state of affairs in the United States, such an armed conquest by the Latter-day Saints may be required of them to regain their lands to build their city of New Jerusalem.

An LDS teaching says, “His first appearance (at the Second Coming) will be to the righteous Saints who have gathered to the New Jerusalem” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 101).

Joseph Smith said, “Behold, I, the Lord, have brought you together that the promise might be fulfilled, that the faithful among you should be preserved and rejoice together in the land of Missouri. I, the Lord, promise the faithful and cannot lie” (D&C 62:6 – August 1831).

Members of the LDS Church today should consider those who were persecuted and forced out of Missouri in the early years of Mormonism. Did the Lord fail in his promise to the faithful or were those Latter-day Saints who went to Utah considered unfaithful and unpreserved? Those who remained in Missouri were Emma Smith, her son Joseph Smith III, and others.

Was there a total apostasy in Missouri or did in fact the Lord preserve some faithful saints there? One cannot find any revelation in Doctrine and Covenants instructing Latter-day Saints to journey to Utah.

If one accepts the Doctrine and Covenants as being inspired of God, the likely answer for the end result is found in section 113: “The bands of her neck [Zion, the people of God] are the curses of God upon her” (vv. 7-10). This curse still

remains on the “Zion” who migrated to Utah. It is evident when you consider this state, as a percentage of its population, is primarily Mormon.

The rates of divorce and abortion are unusually high when compared to other American states (source: Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, Marriages and Divorces – 2005; Centers for Disease Control, Abortion Surveillance – 2003).

Zion shall be redeemed in God’s due time. This is the hope of Latter-day Saints (D&C 136:18). But Christians already have this hope since Jesus has redeemed his spiritual Zion. His physical Zion (the nation of Israel) will be redeemed too (Zech. 1:17).

The Latter-day Saints today are different than their early brethren. They are not building cities of refuge from the coming wrath of God and they have stopped the gathering. LDS president Hinckley said, “What a marvelous thing it is, my brethren and sisters, to have such a great legacy. Now those days are past. There is no more serious persecution; there is no more gathering to Zion” (“News of the Church,” *Ensign*, August 1997).

It is odd that Mr. Hinckley does not understand why the gathering was said to have been instituted in the first place, nor does he seem aware of the command to gather the saints to New Jerusalem to prepare for Christ’s second coming.

Teachings from the LDS scriptures create some confusion about the city of New Jerusalem. The Mormon version of New Jerusalem is built up by the remnant of Jacob (the seed of all twelve sons of Jacob) and whichever Gentiles repent.

“But if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance. And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 21:22-25).

The account of Ether, another Book of Mormon prophet, gives a slightly different rendition. The holy city is built up unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph (the seed of one of the sons of Jacob) before the coming of Christ and before the earth passes away. Latter-day Saints would build this city to be like unto the Jerusalem of old.

Heaven and earth are recorded as passing away and then another New Jerusalem and old Jerusalem come.

“And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type. Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come when the earth shall pass away” (Ether 13:6-8).

“And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old save the old have passed away, and all things have become new. And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein,

for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel. And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb” (Ether 13:9-11).

The Pearl of Great Price records that Enoch and his entire city was translated to heaven: “And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is fled” (Moses 7:69).

The city of Enoch returns from heaven at some future time and is possibly melded into the New Jerusalem on earth.

“And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other” (Moses 7:63).

There may be confusion here because some Latter-day Saints believe the city of Enoch may actually be the city of New Jerusalem which comes from heaven.

Let’s see what the Bible has to say. The city of New Jerusalem is built by God. It is not on the earth before Jesus returns. It descends down from heaven after the Millennium. “And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2).

The city lies foursquare. The length, width, and height are the same—12,000 furlongs. The thickness of the wall is 144 cubits. The wall is of jasper. The city is pure gold and has twelve gates. There are three gates each on the north, south, east, and west sides. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem (vv. 13-22). It is this city that we seek to come (Heb. 13:14; Rev. 3:12).

Latter-day Saints may be planning to build something but so far it isn't following the biblical version. The land of Missouri is not even capable of accommodating it.

It should also be apparent by now that the city of Enoch is not the city of New Jerusalem.

The land of America was said to have been kept secret from the knowledge of other nations as a sign of God's wisdom. God would bring other nations to this land to scatter and smite Lehi's descendants because they had rejected him (2 Nephi 1:8-11). The footnote is linked to 1 Nephi 13:12-20.

There are a few peculiar things about this. First, why would God's wisdom be required to prevent others from overrunning the land when his power could easily have prevented anyone from coming upon the land even if they knew where it was? Second, the Nephite/Lamanite nation was said to have rejected God, evident by the final battle around 420 AD. When you read 2 Nephi 1, you get no impression that over 1,000 years would pass until other nations were to have been brought over to scatter the disbelieving Lamanites who had survived. Generation after generation passed amongst the God-rejecting Lamanites between 420 and 1492 AD but you have no evidence of the judgments which are said to have rested upon them (2 Nephi 1:10).

5. Communication between God and Man



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 7-10, Pages 36-56

The Holy Ghost

Why Did the Holy Ghost Come to Adam?

Page 36 – The Lord sent the Holy Ghost to testify of the Father and of the Son and to teach Adam and Eve the gospel.

The Holy Ghost first came in a ministerial role to Christ's disciples as they waited for him in Jerusalem: "I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

What is the gospel?

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

It should be clear from this passage that the gospel is very important. Paul says here that it is the power of God for salvation, without which we could not be saved from our sins. He proclaims a curse on anyone, man or angel, who proclaims a different gospel than what he has taught (Gal. 1:6-9).

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4). “Righteousness based on faith speaks thus ... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Rom. 10:6-9).

Similar truths are found in the following verses: Matthew 10:32-33, Acts 16:31, Romans 4:20-25, Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Peter 1:3-5, and 1 John 5:11-13.

The gospel according to the Bible is simply the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the atonement of sins.

Gospel Fundamentals has some peculiar teachings on the Bible, Book of Mormon, and the gospel. It says the Bible contains the words of God and the true teachings of God (p. 42). The Book of Mormon contains the gospel taught by Jesus (p. 45). The way or plan to return to Heavenly Father is called the gospel (pp. 53, 173). The gospel tells us all we need to know and do to receive eternal life (p. 203).

Celestial Marriage, the Law of Consecration, the Word of Wisdom, and proxy work for the dead are not part of the

fulness of the gospel. They are not found in either the Bible or the Book of Mormon—therefore they are not the way to return to God.

How much more gospel does the LDS Church teach?

Gospel Principles defines the gospel as, “the plan of salvation, which embraces all that is necessary for us to be saved and exalted; the good news that Jesus is the Christ” (Glossary section, p. 379).

The Mormon gospel embraces faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, temple work, missionary work, tithing, abstaining from strong drinks, tobacco, and caffeine, confessing Joseph Smith as a prophet, temple marriage, baptism for the dead, and genealogy research. The ultimate goal of the Mormon gospel is becoming a god (D&C 132:19-20). Salvation is a long process involving many steps and reliance upon good works for its aspiration to be found.

In simple terms, this gospel is not found in the Book of Mormon. Also, this was not the gospel Jesus preached to the people (Luke 20:1).

“Grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts. Grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 25). “The faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things” (p. 31).

Likewise, the Book of Mormon teaches grace is only sufficient after you “deny yourself of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind, and strength” (Moroni 10:32).

Who are Latter-day Saints?

LDS theology teaches you cannot inherit salvation without a sincere total effort and sacrificing everything.

The Bible teaches faith without works is dead and that we are saved through faith, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9; James 2:26). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

“I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants” (Mosiah 2:21).

Latter-day Saints need to consider this instead of thinking they are worthy enough to go into some temple.

Many churches have forgotten about grace and have placed yokes on their disciples (Acts 15:10-11).

There is a very popular verse in the Book of Mormon which says, “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23).

Did you notice the subtle change in this Book of Mormon teaching? This statement of Nephi is not appropriate to use in one’s argument because God’s commandments are not conditional—try to do what you can and then add grace to it.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

They are unconditional—you must do all that God commands if you want to come to him on that basis.

It would be worthwhile to study the third chapter of Galatians.

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal. 3:6-7).

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (vv. 10-11). We are saved by mercy (Titus 3:5).

What is the work of God?

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28-29).

Believe on the real Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Who is the Holy Ghost?

Page 37 – The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead. He is a spirit that has the form and likeness of a man (see D&C 130:22). He can be in only one place at a time.

Please follow very carefully otherwise you may get confused.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Let's read the passage referenced in Doctrine and Covenants.

“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the [body of the] Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.”

I inserted the phrase “body of the” so the context remains consistent.

How can the LDS Church teach the body of the Holy Ghost can dwell in someone and yet the body of the Holy Ghost can only be in one place at a time?

Is the LDS Church really talking about “influence” instead?

Let's reword the passage.

“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the [influence of the] Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.”

Do you notice the problem here?

If “influence” is meant, one changes the passage to have two opposing contexts—“body” (first referring to the Father and the Son) and “influence” (then referring to the Holy Ghost).

To make sense of this passage, one must conclude that the context is either body or influence, but not both.

So if the context is “body,” the Holy Ghost's body can indwell multiple people at the same time—thus making him omnipresent.

Now, what if we change the context to “influence?”

Can the influence of the Father and the Son dwell in multiple people at the same time? Is the influence of the Father and the Son also omnipresent like in the case of the Holy Ghost?

Suppose they do have a body of flesh and bones as LDS theology teaches. Does having this type of body make their influence not omnipresent whereas having a spirit body makes the Holy Ghost omnipresent?

Why would a Latter-day Saint even think about the context of “influence” when Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 is talking about a “body?” Do you see the problem which arises if people apply the wrong context?

What if the context of the passage is “person?” Is that not the same as “body?”

Therefore, it seems to say that the Holy Ghost is a spirit person who dwells in multiple people at the same time. This makes him omnipresent again.

Can the body of the Holy Spirit be in more than one place at a time without the person of the Holy Spirit also being in more than one place at a time? Is there any effect on a person when only the body of the Holy Spirit (minus person and influence) dwells in that person?

If you don't know what the word “dwell” means in this context, you may also want to look at other verses.

“And this I know, because the Lord hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell” (Alma 34:36).

“For every upright, honest person is possessed more or less, of the Holy Spirit, and this holy messenger in the hearts of men bears record of the word of God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 203-204).

What is the context of who or what is doing the dwelling? The person, the body, or the influence? All three or a combination of the three? The verses will not make sense if you pick the wrong context.

You will not find help if you come with a preconceived notion of a God who is limited by a physical body of flesh and bones. What you think is impossible for man is possible with God. God is a spirit and he is not limited in this way.

Another unclear teaching in LDS theology is the identity of the Holy Ghost. Is he a spirit brother of Jesus and Lucifer or is he a God who existed before the Mormon Heavenly Father became a God?

You can quickly spot the confusion in LDS theology by forcing a consistent interpretation of the context in section 130:22.

Joseph Smith also gave a revelation that God does not dwell in the hearts of men: “The idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man’s heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false” (D&C 130:2-3). Since the Mormon Church today propagates Smith’s teaching that Heavenly Father has a body of flesh and bones, Latter-day Saints are unclear on how the Father can dwell within Jesus (D&C 93:17; John 14:10). Not understanding the omnipresence of God, they seem to be confused on the context of body and influence.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

2 Corinthians 6:16 says, “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Will Latter-day Saints also insert the word “influence” in this passage and thus break their context of Doctrine and Covenants 130:22? People can quickly become confused when they do not understand the correct nature of God’s presence.

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). Christians are uniting in fellowship and prayer in groups of two or more around the world. Jesus is able to be with them at the same time for he is omnipresent. Jesus told Nicodemus that the Son of Man is in heaven (John 3:13).

Jesus says he is there, not only his influence.

Latter-day Saints have not found the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient God of the Bible. They have found an exalted man instead.

Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual states, “Three glorified, exalted, and perfected personages comprise the Godhead or supreme presidency of the universe. They are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost” (p. 8).

Do you believe in one God or three Gods?

“I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages

and three Gods” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*, 2008, pp. 41-42).

How did the Holy Ghost reach godhood without the key requirement of marriage (*Gospel Principles*, p. 241)? Who atoned for him? When did the Holy Ghost die and achieve this state of being glorified, exalted, and perfected?

Is the Holy Ghost part of a monster?

“Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are only one God! I say that is a strange God anyhow—three in one, and one in three! ... He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 372).

Joseph Smith seemed to be unsure and gave another explanation: “Which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal” (D&C 20:28).

Latter-day Saints claim this means they are “one in purpose.” But if the Book of Mormon meant “one in purpose,” it would have said so—seeing it also claimed to write in plainness and simplicity (2 Nephi 31:3; D&C 133:57). One reason for the confusion about God is that people try to understand him as if he were finite instead of infinite (Isa. 55:8; Ps. 50:21). Think of one “what” and three “whos” (i.e. one God and three personages).

In another place, the Mormon teaching of “one God” means “they are united as one in the attributes of perfection” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 8). So in theory, if all obedient Mormons become Gods, all these so-called “Gods” will be “one God” too.

“There is a oneness in the Godhead as well as a distinctness of personality. This oneness ... guards against the erroneous idea that these three may be distinct and independent deities and rivals for our worship” (p. 8).

But Latter-day Saints do view the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct deities. They claim to worship God the Father and yet the Book of Mormon says to worship Jesus with all your might, mind, and strength (2 Nephi 25:29).

There are several references to being one with Christ (John 17:11, 21-22). The Mormon scriptures echo a similar sentiment (3 Nephi 19:23, 29; D&C 29:13; 35:2). But the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God in one Godhead. We may agree with them but we are not part of their Godhead.

Remember that Jesus taught God is a Spirit (John 4:24). The Book of Mormon also mentions that God is a great Spirit (Alma 18:24-29), not a being of flesh and bones. Unfortunately, Joseph Smith went beyond the very book he was said to have translated.

Praying To Our Heavenly Father

How Are Prayers Answered?

Page 43 – Sometimes the answer may be no, because what we have asked for would not be best for us.

Notice how the focus is on what is best for us instead of what is best for God. The message of the Bible is that we should do everything for God’s glory, not to gain something for ourselves: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Christians are saved to do good works and to bring glory unto the Father (Eph. 2:10). Works are the necessary results of salvation but they are not required for salvation—that is God’s part.

What is the gift of eternal life? Can a gift be earned?

What do gifts remind you of? A birthday? Christmas? Sometimes in your life you have received them without any deed or work on your part. They are freely given. It is not considered a gift if it can be earned.

Suppose you are driving on the highway and you experience a flat tire. A stranger comes along and replaces your tire and then drives off without asking anything in return. This is a free gift to you.

The same is true of Heavenly Father’s gift. Believers receive the gift of eternal life through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God’s gift to mankind is that Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins. It is Jesus who perfects us.

“For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Because Jesus kept all of God’s laws perfectly in our place, he removed our debt to God with the offering of his life. Heavenly Father accepts us as perfect because Jesus was already perfect for us.

We learn from the Bible that salvation is a free gift from God that cannot be earned. We cannot become worthy to receive it. Some will even be saved with burnt-up works (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

“No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law” (Rom. 3:20). “Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Rom. 5:18). “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation comes not to those who work for it but rather to those who believe on Jesus Christ instead (Rom. 4:5).

The apostle Paul describes those who would try to earn this gift of salvation.

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:30-33).

Do you know anyone who is working for salvation? Are you stumbling in your effort to perfect yourself?

Luke 15:11-32 highlights a very important parable showing God’s love and mercy toward mankind. It is a good example of his forgiveness.

Picture for a moment that the father in the parable is actually Heavenly Father and you will see its potency. One son demands his portion to be given to him. He then leaves his father’s presence and indulges in the sins of worldly pleasures. He eventually loses everything and yearns to return home.

This son represents all of us who have sinned against Heavenly Father and have fallen short of the commandment to be perfect. It begins with the son realizing he is lost (v. 18) and not worthy to be called a son (v. 19). He then decides to return to his father (v. 20).

Likewise, we are not worthy nor can we become worthy after sinning. Once we realize we are sinners and that we are not worthy, then begins our journey to return to our Heavenly Father. His father was overjoyed at the sight of his returned son (v. 20). He then admitted his sin and his unworthiness to be called his son (v. 21).

Confess that you are unworthy and return in humility to the Father.

The boy's father did not expect a repayment of the squandered riches. There was no debt to repay. This is the beautiful message of Christ's atonement. Heavenly Father loved you so much that he sent his Son to take all your sins upon himself. God will not remember your sin anymore and he will not expect a debt to be repaid. Jesus Christ is our sure hope that the debt does not have to be paid back. Jesus has already paid it in full. This is true redemption.

Prophets of God

What is a Prophet?

Page 47 – What identifies a true prophet? A true prophet is always chosen by God and called through proper priesthood authority.

What about truth and miracles? Are they not signs which identify a true prophet (2 Cor. 12:12)?

Page 47 – A prophet teaches truth and interprets the word of God.

Can a true prophet teach contrary to the Bible or give a false prophecy?

When one reads the Book of Mormon, one will notice that many sections were taken from the Bible. Unfortunately, Joseph Smith made an incorrect copy from Isaiah 2:8 to 2 Nephi 12:8. The passage is referring to people who humbled themselves before idols. Mr. Smith made it say that those who do not bow down to idols must not be forgiven. The Bible has the correct rendition.

Through the Ages God Has Called Prophets to Lead Mankind

The Book of Mormon teaches God raised up prophets unto other nations besides the Jews and that these nations had their own scriptures (2 Nephi 29:7-12; Mosiah 3:13). Since the LDS Church had forbidden the priesthood from going to the Negro race until 1978, it would be interesting to find out which Mormon prophets took the gospel to the black countries of Africa before then.

Page 48 – Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon while a young man.

It is interesting to note that the way in which he was said to have done the translation is not referred to in the current *Gospel Principles* or *Gospel Fundamentals* manuals. Wearing

the Urim and Thummim or darkly placing his face in a hat is not mentioned at all.

We Have a Living Prophet on the Earth Today

Page 50 – The Lord will never allow the President of the Church to lead us astray.

The Mormon prophet Jacob revealed polygamy was an abomination to God and he made no allowances: “Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none” (Jacob 2:24-28).

But Joseph Smith said David’s unions to wives and concubines were righteous acts and he made no exception: “David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. David’s wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant” (D&C (132:38-39).

God did not give Bathsheba or plural wives to David by the hand of Nathan.

Jacob said multiple wives and concubines were not allowed. Joseph Smith taught they were permitted. Do you see the difference? Besides, the Book of Mormon prophet expounded some negative effects of having a polygamous marriage (Jacob 2:25-35; 3:5-10). The heartaches of polygamy’s fruits are still felt in some Mormon communities to this day.

Joseph Smith revealed the approaching conflict in South Carolina would lead to the second coming of Christ (D&C 87:1-6; 130:12-13). This did not happen.

He taught the war in heaven (of Revelation chapter 12) happened when Satan's plan to redeem mankind was not accepted at the council of heaven (D&C 29:36-37).

But he also taught the war in heaven is yet future: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things that are written therein; for the time is at hand. Now, I make this declaration, that those things which John saw in heaven had no allusion to anything that had been on the earth previous to that time, because they were the representation of things which must shortly come to pass, and not of what has already transpired" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, pp. 289-290). "The beasts which John saw had to devour the inhabitants of the earth in days to come. The revelations do not give us to understand anything of the past in relation to the kingdom of God" (p. 290).

These teachings have been omitted from the 2008 edition.

Mr. Smith also revealed God commanded Abraham to take Hagar to be his wife because Sarah was barren at the time: "God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises" (D&C 132:34-35).

Joseph Smith did not understand that Isaac was the child of promise and the true heir. The Lord did not make a covenant with Ishmael.

“And, behold the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Gen. 15:4). To speed up God’s schedule, Abraham and Sarah decided to take matters into their own hands and force the issue of a child to be born: “And Sarai said unto Abram ... I pray thee, go unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai” (Gen. 16:2). Abraham hearkened unto Sarah’s voice, not God’s voice.

Sarah says to Abraham, “My wrong be upon thee” (v. 5).

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant.” God promises to Abraham that Sarah would bear a son (Gen. 17:15-17). Abraham tried to substitute Ishmael for God’s promise: “And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee” (v. 18).

Abraham tried to promote Ishmael as his lawful heir but God would not have it. God rejected Ishmael because he was not the child of promise. He told Abraham that the covenant would extend through Isaac’s line, not through Ishmael (v. 19). God would bless Ishmael but the covenant would be with the child of promise (vv. 20-21).

“Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed” (Gen. 21:10-13).

It was not God who commanded Abraham to take Hagar as a concubine.

There was an old custom used by people at the time to ensure the family name continued but it was not of faith. Abraham and Sarah did not have precise faith that God would give them a child so they used the custom of those around them to speed up God's timetable. Their actions did not reveal faith in the miraculous powers of God. Since it was not of faith, it was not a law of God.

Ishmael was born after the flesh while Isaac was born after the Spirit (Gal. 4:29). "After the flesh" is a term referring to something done outside of God's will.

Here are some examples: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4-14; 9:8). "But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise" (Gal. 4:23).

What is of the flesh is not of faith—and because it is not of faith it is not a law of God. The Bible shows God did not command Abraham to take Hagar. Joseph Smith did not believe the biblical meaning of these concepts.

Joseph F. Smith interpreted Ezekiel's vision as being the resurrection of the dead: "Moreover, Ezekiel, who was shown in vision the great valley of dry bones, which were to be clothed upon with flesh, to come forth again in the resurrection of the dead, living souls" (D&C 138:43).

Ezekiel is not speaking about resurrection but rather the re-gathering of the Jews to the land of Israel. “Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel” (Ezek. 37:1-14).

“For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it” (D&C 132:22). Joseph Smith was speaking about exaltation to godhood.

Contrast this with the words of Jesus when he said, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able ... And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:23-24, 29). Jesus was talking about salvation and not exaltation.

Do teachings such as these reflect LDS presidents who do not lead people astray?

Scriptures

What Scriptures Do We Have Today?

Page 52 – When the Lord’s servants speak or write under the influence of the Holy Ghost, their words become scripture (see D&C 68:4). The inspired words of our living prophets are also accepted as scripture.

The last words to be canonized were in 1978 but the words written in the *Ensign* magazines and spoken at the General Conferences are believed to be authoritative.

Page 53 – We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly (Articles of Faith 1:8).

This would not seem to be the case in our study so far.

Page 53 – The Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith said that the Book of Mormon is “the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”

It is believed by some that the Book of Jacob is sufficient enough evidence for the divinity of the Book of Mormon. A careful examination of a particular chapter within it may surprise you. I invite the reader to look at the “Commentary” section of <http://www.ldslearning.org>.

Celestial Marriage, the Law of Consecration, the Word of Wisdom, and baptism for the dead are missing from the Book of Mormon. How can one get nearer to God by abiding precepts which are missing therein and instead are found in another book called Doctrine and Covenants? Wouldn't it be more fair to say this other book gets one nearer to God than the Book of Mormon? Doctrine and Covenants should be called the keystone of the Mormon religion.

The Book of Mormon is also called the “record of the stick of Ephraim” (D&C 27:5), but it is a supposed record of the Jaredites (who were not of Ephraim) and the descendants of Lehi (who was of Manasseh—see Alma 10:3). Latter-day Saints interpret this “stick of Ephraim” to be the Book

of Mormon and the “stick of Judah” as the Bible (Ezek. 37:16-17).

The Bible says the two sticks are representative of two nations: “And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel [not in America]; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations [not two books], neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezek. 37:17, 22).

The caption “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” has not always been in the Book of Mormon. You can verify this by looking for editions dating pre-1981. This was probably done to make it appear more Christian and to boost its acceptance in the mainstream population.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:27 says the Book of Mormon is God’s word to the Gentile that soon might go to the Jews. Simply put, “Gentile” refers to those people who are not of the nation of Israel (Eph. 3:6).

But the *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* says, “Thus Joseph Smith, of the tribe of Ephraim, the chief and foremost tribe of Israel itself, was the Gentile by whose hand the Book of Mormon came forth, and the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who have the gospel and who are of Israel by blood descent, are the Gentiles who carry salvation to the Lamanites and to the Jews” (p. 286).

Ephraim was not the chief and foremost tribe in the Bible.

“Wherefore, I must bring forth the fulness of my gospel from the Gentiles unto the house of Israel” (D&C 14:10).

So, Joseph Smith is actually an Ephraimite and Latter-day Saints are Jews by blood descent ... and they are called Gentiles?

“I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious” (1 Nephi 13:34).

Since Joseph Smith believed the restored gospel was brought forth unto him, he is a Gentile ... but yet he is said to be of the tribe of Ephraim?

Joseph Smith revealed in 1831, “Wherefore, it is wisdom that the land should be purchased by the saints, and also every tract lying westward, even unto the line running directly between Jew and Gentile” (D&C 57:4).

So, Latter-day Saints are both Jew and Gentile and there is a line between Jew and Gentile? Are you confused?

The Bible tells us that “Gentiles” is a reference to those who are not of the nation or house of Israel (Gen. 10:5). Even the Book of Mormon has a similar teaching about this (2 Nephi 10:16; 26:23; 27:1; 29:5).

The United States is said to have a prophetic history and Christopher Columbus is believed to be the Gentile of 1 Nephi 13:12 who came to the land of America (*Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, pp. 286-287; *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp. 569-592). England (believed to be their mother Gentiles) would battle against them upon land and water in the Revolutionary War (1 Nephi 13:17).

There are several problems with this interpretation.

These Gentiles were not captives but rather explorers (1 Nephi 13:13, 19). They sailed originally from Spain. They were not delivered from captivity out of all other nations. Other settlers came from other parts of Europe but these Gentiles were not “white and exceedingly fair and beautiful, like unto the Nephite people before they were slain” (v. 15).

It is unclear if this is a reference to either a physical or spiritual “skin of whiteness” but let’s examine both options.

The people with Christopher Columbus and the others who followed in his exploratory path were not all “white” physically.

The Book of Mormon says the Lamanites were once “white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome” until they were cursed with the mark of dark skin for their rebellion (2 Nephi 5:20-23). They were given a skin of blackness so they would not be enticing unto the white Nephites ... if you can believe that.

Neither were the Gentiles “white” spiritually. It is said that the great and abominable church removed the “precious things from the book of the Lamb of God, bound the Gentiles with a yoke of iron, brought them down into captivity, and caused them to enter into a state of blindness” (1 Nephi 13:5, 28-32).

6. Jesus Christ as Savior



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 11-12, Pages 61-78

The Life of Christ

Do you worship the true Jesus?

The horrible destiny for those who preach a false Jesus is hell. The Book of Mormon even says Satan teaches people there is no hell. But it also teaches you are lost and cannot be delivered from it once you are there (2 Nephi 28:22-23).

The Life of Christ Was Predicted Long Before His Birth

Page 63 – Nephi saw the virgin holding a child in her arms (1 Nephi 11:18-21).

There have been a range of opinions on how Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb but all seem to attest she was a virgin before Christ was born.

A few notable teachings follow.

“His unique status in the flesh as the offspring of a mortal mother and of an immortal, or resurrected and glorified, Father. Jesus Christ is the Son of Elohim both as spiritual and bodily offspring; that is to say, Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, p. 356).

This seems to imply Heavenly Father had some form of sexual relations with Mary to conceive Jesus’ physical body; as it is believed by some that he had some form of sexual union with Heavenly Mother to produce the spiritual body of Christ.

The Mormon god probably needed to get married to Mary otherwise he would have committed adultery. But afterwards he needed to divorce Mary so she could marry Joseph. If true, Heavenly Father committed incest with his own daughter Mary—since Mormons believe all humans on this planet are his offspring.

“That Child to be born of Mary was begotten of Elohim, the Eternal Father, not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof; and, the offspring from that association of supreme sanctity, celestial Sireship, and pure through mortal maternity, was of right to be called the Son of the Highest” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 9).

This teaching seems to have its roots in the Book of Mormon where an angel is reported to have said, “Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh” (1 Nephi 11:14-18; Alma 5:48).

“The condescension of God, of which the scriptures speak, means that the Immortal Father—the glorified, exalted, enthroned ruler of the universe—came down from his station of dominion and power to become the Father of a Son who would be born of Mary, after the manner of the flesh” (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*).

Latter-day Saints must ponder that the Mormon god (believed by some to have a body of flesh and bones) needed to come down from his station to earth to become the father of Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us Jesus was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, not through physical sex between God and Mary: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

Page 63 – For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men.

But *Gospel Principles* says, “The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ” (p. 11). How can he exist from all eternity to all eternity as God when the Mormon Jesus is a procreated being who progressed to become one of many Gods?

Page 64 – Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. That is why he is called the Only Begotten Son. He inherited divine powers from his Father.

But the Book of Mormon referred to Jesus as the “Only Begotten” even before he came to earth in human flesh (2 Nephi 25:12; Alma 5:48; 9:26).

What does begotten mean?

Gospel Principles says all men and women were begotten and born of heavenly parents before coming to earth (p. 11). Hebrews 11:17 wrote that Abraham offered up his only begotten son. Acts 13:33 says, “God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” The context of this last verse is the resurrection (see also verse 30). Jesus is the Eternal God—he always had divine powers. He never had to inherit them.

Latter-day Saints need to understand there are other definitions for “begotten” (1 Cor. 4:15; Phm. 1:10; Heb. 11:17; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 John 5:1, 18; Rev. 1:5).

He Redeemed Us from Our Sins and Saved Us from Death

Page 67 – In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus bled blood at every pore.

Jesus was sweating in Gethsemane—he wasn’t bleeding. “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).

Page 68 – Shortly after his resurrection, the Savior appeared to the Nephites and established his Church in the Americas.

It should be worth noting that Jesus is the foundation and chief corner stone (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). A foundation is laid only once and then the building is constructed. Thus, there is only one Christ and one foundation of the church. No one can destroy it.

If Ephesians 2:20 teaches the LDS belief that a new foundation of apostles and prophets is needed every time God removes his church from the earth, it also teaches a new Christ is needed because he is called the chief corner stone in the same verse.

The Atonement

Page 71 – Jesus Christ came into the world to be crucified for the world and to bear the sins of the world.

Joseph Smith taught Jesus created other worlds: “That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:24). Would you believe in the “extraterrestrial” Jesus if you lived on these other worlds?

Gospel Fundamentals poses the question: “What do you need to do so that the Atonement of Jesus can pay for your sins?” (p. 59). It would seem that if an individual does not do everything he is required to do, the atonement of Christ will not pay for his sins.

The Book of Mormon describes events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus that are dramatically different from the biblical account.

“And the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough. And many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shaken till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate” (3 Nephi 8:13-14).

“And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth ... they did last for about the space of three hours ... and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land. And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days that there was no light seen; and there was great mourning and howling and weeping among all the people continually; yea, great were the groanings of the people, because of the darkness and the great destruction which had come upon them” (3 Nephi 8:17-19, 23).

It is unclear how the Book of Mormon would equate such destruction to people whom Jesus never personally ministered to while nothing of this sort happened among the very people who rejected him.

According to the Book of Mormon, the time of the great destruction began on the fourth day of the first month. The three days of darkness were said to be a sign of the crucifixion of Christ (3 Nephi 8:3-5). This darkness is said to have also extended to various islands around the world (1 Nephi 19:10).

But Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month (Lev. 23:5). The Book of Mormon’s timing was very wrong.

Its author also failed to write about a very important event which happened at Christ's crucifixion—the tearing of the temple veil (Matt. 27:51; Luke 23:45). One could surmise the author wasn't a Christian. He did not understand its significance.

The tearing of the temple veil marked the end of needing the temple and priests for the salvation of man. Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant. This is more clearly taught in Hebrews chapters 9 and 10, especially in 10:19-22. Latter-day Saints today fail to see its significance because they rely on temples and the priesthood for their salvation.

The Atonement Makes It Possible ... to Be Saved From Their Sins

When one reads pages 75-78 of *Gospel Principles*, it is evident the LDS Church teaches we still have to pay Jesus back for our debt. Here is the conversation written therein.

“I will pay the debt if you will free the debtor from his contract so that he may keep his possessions and not go to prison.”

As the creditor was pondering the offer, the mediator added, “You demanded justice. Though he cannot pay you, I will do so. You will have been justly dealt with and can ask no more. It would not be just.”

And so the creditor agreed.

The mediator turned then to the debtor. “If I pay your debt, will you accept me as your creditor?”

“Oh yes, yes,” cried the debtor. “You saved me from prison and showed mercy to me.”

“Then,” said the benefactor, “you will pay the debt to me and I will set the terms. It will not be easy, but it will be possible. I will provide a way. You need not go to prison.”

(Source: “The Mediator,” *Ensign*, May 1977, pp. 54-55).

If you carefully study this story, you will see that Heavenly Father is the creditor, the sinner is the debtor, and Jesus Christ is the mediator (benefactor). The sinner still owes the debt to Christ.

Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual tells us that Jesus paying the debt frees people from mortality and gives them the ability to be resurrected—even though they may be lost (p. 22).

The Bible shows Christ has already paid the debt in full. There is no debt for us to pay back. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Jesus kept all of God’s laws perfectly in our place. He removed forever our debt to God with the offering of his life. Heavenly Father accepts us as perfect now—not because of what we can still do, but because Jesus was already perfect for us.

Is forgiveness a relinquishment of debt or an obligation to repay the debt? Is it to forgive and forget or is it to forgive and still collect the debt?

God said, “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where redemption of these is, there is no more offering for sin” (Heb. 10:17-18). When Heavenly

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Father forgives, he forgets. God demands no repayment. His forgiveness is free and full.

If you owed someone \$10 and they forgave you that debt, you would no longer owe them \$10. But the \$10 would still have to be paid back in Mormon theology.

Jesus became our substitute, took the guilt of our sins upon him, and paid for them with his blood: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. 1:7).

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:4-5).

7. The Church of Christ



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 13-17, Pages 81-114

The Priesthood

Why Do We Need the Priesthood on the Earth?

Page 81 – We must have priesthood authority to act in the name of God when performing the sacred ordinances of the gospel, such as baptism.

Priesthood authority comes from God. Christian females are allowed to baptize others.

The LDS Church has a peculiar teaching about who holds the priesthood today.

“The great majority of those who have come into the Church are Ephraimites. It is the exception to find one of any other tribe, unless it is of Manesseh. It is Ephraim, today, who holds the priesthood. It is Ephraim who is building temples” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 66). “Temples are not new. Whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth who will obey his word, they have been commanded

to build temples” (“Young Adults and the Temple,” *Ensign*, February 2006, p. 12).

Seems like all Latter-day Saints are only from two tribes according to this. But it is unclear why only Ephraim is considered to be God’s people and building temples.

Page 82 – The prophet, who is the President of the LDS Church, serves as the spokesman for God to all members of the Church, and all people on the earth.

Some other groups make a similar claim for their leader.

Page 82 – They receive the priesthood by the laying on of hands.

The Bible says we are priests by faith (1 Pet. 2:5).

Did Joseph Smith re-establish the Aaronic priesthood?

It should be worth noting that Jesus replaced the Aaronic priesthood with a new one. The Old Covenant was the Aaronic system of sacrifices and its respective priesthood. Only the tribe of Levi held the right to the Levitical priesthood (Num. 8:5-26).

“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:11-13). “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. For where a

testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator” (Heb. 9:15-16).

The new priesthood is the “holy priesthood of believers” (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

Joseph Smith’s version of the priesthood is different. The Mormon Aaronic and Melchezidek priesthoods forbid women from becoming members. Female believers in the true body of Christ are already priests and they do not have to be ordained. This is the royal priesthood Peter wrote about. Up until 1978, blacks were forbidden to become priests in the Mormon Church. Believing black men and women in the true body of Christ are priests already.

The original Aaronic priesthood followed a very detailed set of procedures and sacrifices. The LDS Church has eliminated the animal sacrifices and the grain offerings—it has become another version, devoid of all the ceremonial duties of the Old Testament. Can it still be called the Aaronic priesthood?

Gospel Fundamentals has some peculiar teachings about the priesthood.

All of Jacob’s sons are said to have had the priesthood (p. 90). You can give the Aaronic priesthood to others (p. 108). The Bible says the Aaronic priesthood was based on lineage. A deacon in the LDS Church (an ordained worthy male at least 12 years of age) is not allowed to preach the gospel or baptize anyone (pp. 108-109). How different this is from the Bible.

A Mormon priest (at least 16 years of age) is only allowed to baptize with the permission of a bishop or branch president

(p. 112). One does not find this permission-seeking in the Bible.

“Ordinances are sacred ceremonies performed by those who have been given the authority of the priesthood. When Jesus was on the earth, He performed ordinances to help people. He made the deaf able to hear and even brought the dead back to life” (p. 115). Do you believe Jesus performed a sacred ceremony when he healed the centurion’s servant from a distance (Luke 7:1-10)?

Priesthood Organization

Page 85 – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is governed by the priesthood. Men young and old are baptized in the Church, and when they are judged worthy they are ordained to the priesthood. They are given the authority to act for the Lord and do his work on the earth.

Did you notice that? First comes baptism, then comes ordination to obtain the priesthood.

The practice of denying the priesthood to certain races from 1830 to 1978 has proved to be a source of embarrassment to the LDS Church—both in the past and in the present.

Here is an excerpt of the “60 Minutes” program on the LDS Church broadcast on CBS TV, April 7 1996.

Mike Wallace: From 1830 to 1978, blacks could not become priests in the Mormon Church. Right?

Gordon B. Hinckley: That’s correct.

Mike Wallace: Why?

Gordon B. Hinckley: Because the leaders of the church at the time interpreted that doctrine that way.

Mike Wallace: Church policy had it that blacks had the mark of Cain. Brigham Young said, “Cain slew his brother, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin.”

Gordon B. Hinckley: It’s behind us. Look, that’s behind us. Don’t worry about those little flecks of history.

Seems like President Hinckley is saying that the practice to forbid ordination of blacks resulted from misinterpretations of scripture by early church leaders.

Why should we not worry about these little “flecks” of history? Were the early Mormon Church leaders mistaken in the interpretation of their scriptures—such as Abraham 1:20-27, Moses 7:8, 22-23 and 2 Nephi 5:20-23?

If it can be shown that many Latter-day Saints believed such misrepresentations, wouldn’t this mean the LDS Church (as a collective) was in darkness instead of light for 148 years on such a significant theological point?

We read about the curse of dark skin in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 5:21). It is said God cursed the Lamanites with black skin so they would not be enticing unto the Nephites.

Even though Alma 17:14 describes the Lamanites as being “a wild, ferocious, plundering, robbing, and murdering people,” God felt the need to change their skin color so they would not be enticing to the Nephites—as if their immoral

acts were not sufficient enough to deter the Nephites into wanting to become like them.

It is also stated in 2 Nephi 5:23 that the Nephites would be cursed with dark skin if they married the Lamanites. The babies that were born to the dark-skinned Lamanites also had the curse.

How black skin is not attractive to the white-skinned Nephite people is a discussion for another time.

Alma 3:6-7 records the skins of the Lamanites were dark “according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men. And their brethren sought to destroy them, therefore they were cursed; and the Lord God set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women.”

Strangely enough, the Israelites who conquered the land of Canaan and later apostatized were not cursed with dark skin to separate themselves from those sons of Jacob who remained faithful to God’s covenant. Also, the former inhabitants of Canaan were not cursed with dark skin so they would not be enticing to the Israelites.

White people did not turn black and black people did not turn white even in the LDS period known as the Great Apostasy.

There is a case in Alma 23:18 where the curse was removed from the Lamanites and it did not follow them anymore.

The Book of Mormon depicts Jesus as coming to visit the Nephites somewhere in the Americas circa 34 A.D. (3 Nephi chapters 11-30).

4 Nephi 1:6 tells us that twenty-five years had passed away since Jesus ascended back into heaven, from there to visit all the other lost tribes of the house of Israel. Verse 10 informs us that all the people of Nephi had become “an exceedingly fair and delightful people.” In other words, they became white-skinned—see footnote 10a in the Book of Mormon. It links to 1 Nephi 13:15, 2 Nephi 5:21, and Mormon 9:6.

The Gentiles who are said to have discovered America (i.e. Christopher Columbus and his group) were physically white like the Nephites before they were slain at the great battle with the Lamanites (1 Nephi 13:15). The spiritually-dark Nephites were slain because they had slidden into apostasy.

Let’s specifically look at Mormon 9:6. “O then ye unbelieving, turn ye unto the Lord; cry mightily unto the Father in the name of Jesus, that perhaps ye may be found spotless, pure, fair, and white, having been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, at that great and last day.”

4 Nephi 1:14-17 tells us sixty-six years had passed since the arrival of Christ to the “Americas” (one hundred years from the birth of Christ). This was a time when the happiest people on earth lived in the “Americas.” Only righteous people existed. There were no Nephites, Lamanites, or any manner of “-ites.”

A period of righteousness reigned from around 100 A.D. to 200 A.D. Some time prior to the 200th year, a group of people revolted from the church and called themselves Lamanites again, after their predecessors (4 Nephi 1:20). Sin began to

creep into the church in the 201st year (4 Nephi 1:24). The designation of “Nephites” had come back in the 231st year (4 Nephi 1:35-36). Three other divisions also came about—the Jacobites, the Josephites, and the Zoramites.

4 Nephi 1:45-46 records the Nephites had become wicked as the Lamanites. There were no righteous people except for only three disciples. Moroni 9:20 records the Nephites even exceeded the wickedness of the Lamanites. The Nephites were said to have raped the Lamanite women, tortured them to death, and then ate their flesh (Moroni 9:9-10)—and in none of these circumstances did their skin color become dark.

Mormon 1:13-14 (circa 322 A.D.) says, “wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land” and “there were no gifts from the Lord, and the Holy Ghost did not come upon any, because of their wickedness and unbelief.”

This was a period of total apostasy.

The Mormon Jesus had failed to prevent Satan from destroying his church again; as Latter-day Saints believe Satan destroyed the first century church in Palestine.

Mormon 2:14 tells us the Nephites cursed God and wished they would die. The Lamanites, on the other hand, resorted to offering up Nephite women and children prisoners as human sacrifices to their idols (Mormon 4:15). Mormon 4:12 even records that these people were the most wicked of any of the tribes of Israel.

Strangely enough, the Book of Mormon never describes the return of the curse of black skin upon the Nephites. They are said to be white however when they are slain by people believed to be the Conquistadors around 1492 A.D. (1 Nephi

13:14-15). Or maybe this is a reference to the white Nephites who were killed by the dark Lamanites in another great battle.

The curse of dark skin was not mentioned at all in the great Jaredite civilization that is said to have existed on the American continent before the Nephites came.

When you compare the 1830 version of the Book of Mormon with today's version, you will see a small editing change in 2 Nephi 30:6. The word "white" in the phrase "they shall be a white and a delightsome people" has been changed to "pure." The fact that white has been changed to pure reflects the LDS belief that white skin is symbolic of purity whereas black skin is symbolic of impurity.

Jacob 3:8 tells us white skin will be a sign of one's spiritual purity when appearing before God's throne for judgment. Or maybe this is just for the Lamanites. They are believed to be the principal ancestors of the American Indians (Introduction section, 1981 Book of Mormon). This statement of ancestry is slowly disappearing from some language translations of the Book of Mormon.

While it is said that the church is governed by the priesthood, *Gospel Principles* writes, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (p. 47).

Maybe this didn't apply to the LDS Church for all those years between 1830 and 1978.

There are no such restrictions according to the Bible. Males and females of all races and colors belong to the royal priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:9). Even the Book of Mormon

states, “He inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26:33).

Gospel Principles defines “disciple” as a follower of Christ (p. 378). But how could the LDS Church make disciples of negroes before 1978 when she prevented them from taking temple ordinances? Didn’t the LDS Church believe Jesus wanted to bring everyone back into Heavenly Father’s presence by obeying everything he commanded?

Two Divisions of Priesthood

Page 85 – The Aaronic priesthood was conferred on Aaron and his sons throughout all their generations.

The Bible says only descendants of Aaron can hold the Aaronic priesthood (Num. 16:40; Heb. 7:13-14). Joseph Smith also taught only a literal descendant of Aaron could hold that priesthood (D&C 107:70). Are Latter-day Saints verifying who they ordain an Aaronic priest?

“In restoring the gospel, God again gave the priesthood to men. John the Baptist came in 1829 to ordain Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood” (D&C 13; 27:8, *Gospel Principles*, p. 111).

If you study the history of the church, the messenger did not baptize Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. He is reported to have laid his hands on Joseph and Oliver and ordained them to the priesthood of Aaron. After this first ordination, Oliver baptized Joseph and then Joseph baptized Oliver. Then they

ordained each other a second time (*History of the Church* – volume 1, vv. 68-71).

They were ordained to the priesthood before being baptized in water. But page 85 says a person is baptized before being found worthy to be ordained.

Gospel Principles says on page 88, “When the Aaronic Priesthood is conferred on a man or boy, he is ordained to an office in that priesthood. The offices in the Aaronic Priesthood are deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop.” Joseph Smith held at least one of these offices initially. Since only a literal descendant of Aaron could hold this office (D&C 107:13-16), how were these two individuals proven to come through Aaron’s lineage?

The Book of Mormon also records the prophet Alma baptizing himself and Helam at the same time, then baptizing others (Mosiah 18:12-15). If you read verses 1-7 of the same chapter, Alma is preaching the gospel (a duty of a priesthood holder) even before being properly baptized by someone in authority.

If this messenger was truly John the Baptist, he would have failed in his primary mission. Since Mr. Cowdery was improperly baptized, how could he have had the proper authority to baptize Mr. Smith? If the priesthood came down to us through two improperly baptized men, can Latter-day Saints have a restored priesthood?

Page 89 – The offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood are elder, high priest, patriarch, seventy, and Apostle.

High priests were prevalent in the Book of Mormon (Alma 46:6; Mosiah 23:16). But Joseph Smith revealed the offices

of the Melchizedek Priesthood (originally called the “Holy Priesthood” – D&C 107:3) were removed with Moses, only allowing the lesser priesthood (Aaronic) to continue until John the Baptist (D&C 84:25-27).

The Latter-day Saints are not familiar with the context of the mission of the seventy. Their primary mission existed during the ministry of Christ. Their number increased as the gospel went into other areas after the resurrection of Christ (Luke 10:1-17). The office of seventy today is no more valid than an office of one hundred or one thousand. Besides, the LDS Church limits the office of seventy to only 70, whereas the office of elder has no set limit.

A patriarch is an office of the Melchizedek Priesthood (*Gospel Principles*, p. 89). It is appointed unto a man by blessing and by right (D&C 124:91). The patriarch also has the power to curse those on earth and to perform the binding and the loosing (v. 93). He can also act as an additional prophet and seer to the LDS Church (v. 94).

Patriarchs can also bless Latter-day Saints by indicating if they are the literal blood descendants of Abraham. Those who are not literal descendants are adopted into the family when they receive baptism and confirmation (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 558-559).

The patriarchal order is handed down from father to son, one to which rightly belongs to the literal descendant of the chosen seed (p. 561).

In addition to patriarchs, other Latter-day Saints were also allowed to curse (D&C 24:15; 103:24-25; 124:93; 132:47).

We find opposite admonitions about cursing when we read the Bible.

In James 3:8-10, we see the dangers of not having a tamed tongue. With it we bless God, but if not properly guarded, we fall into the way of cursing men: “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not” (Rom. 12:14).

Page 90 – They have the authority to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Mormon children are said to receive the Holy Ghost when they are eight years old (D&C 68:25-27). Children under eight who lie, steal, or kill are not regarded as sinners (D&C 29:47).

Biblical passages show people receiving the Holy Spirit without the laying on of hands, even before receiving water baptism (Acts 2:4; 10:44).

Is there more than one Melchisedec priest after Christ?

“That another priest should arrive after the order of Melchisedec. For the priesthood being changed” (Heb. 7:11-12). Jesus changed the Aaronic priesthood. There was no Melchisedec priest after Jesus because he is our High Priest. The sacrifices of the Aaronic priesthood have been fulfilled and are no longer required after Christ’s atonement.

Do you know anyone besides Jesus who has the qualifications to be a Melchisedec priest?

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). Mormon males are not harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, nor made higher than the heavens. “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s; for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (Heb. 7:27).

Mormon males need atonement for their sins. “For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7:28). Male Latter-day Saints have infirmity.

The Lord’s Covenant People

God’s Covenant with Abraham and His Descendants

On what basis did God establish a covenant with Abraham?

Page 96 – Because of Abraham’s righteousness, the Lord made a covenant with him and his descendants.

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3).

Members of the Church Are a Covenant People

Page 97 – The Lord promised Abraham that through his descendants the gospel would be taken to all the earth. This opportunity to preach the gospel to all the world belongs only to the Lord’s Church and his covenant people.

This opportunity belongs to no one outside the Mormon Church according to Latter-day Saints. Blacks were not a covenant people before 1978.

Oddly enough, a revelation recorded in August 1831 said women and negroes were apparently allowed to be ordained so they could preach the gospel: “Verily I say unto you, those who desire in their hearts, in meekness, to warn sinners to repentance, let them be ordained unto this power” (D&C 63:57).

Jesus instructed his disciples to preach the gospel to all nations (Matt. 24:14).

The New and Everlasting Covenant

Page 98 – The fulness of the gospel is called the new and everlasting covenant. The Lord calls it everlasting because it is ordained by an everlasting God and because the covenant will never be changed.

How can God be everlasting when Joseph Smith taught God was once a man who became a god? Why has the LDS Church changed the Aaronic priesthood if she believes the covenant will never be changed?

The marriage of a man to multiple wives and concubines was also called the new and everlasting covenant (D&C 132:1). It was discontinued by the Mormon Church in 1890 under pressure by the United States government.

Page 98 – The Lord calls it new because each time the gospel is restored after being taken from the earth, it is new to the people who receive it.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

The LDS Church implies Jesus takes his gospel from the earth occasionally and it does not exist on the earth before it is restored.

But Latter-day Saints should recall that their prophet Joseph Smith said the apostle John would remain on earth and preach the gospel to the nations until Jesus comes again.

“The Lord said unto me: John, my beloved, what desirest thou? For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you. And I said unto him: Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee. And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues, and people” (D&C 7:1-3).

The Pearl of Great Price teaches the gospel would be in the world until the end.

“And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof; and thus it was. Amen” (Moses 5:59).

The Book of Mormon also records the special ministry of three Nephite disciples who would remain in the world, preaching the gospel, until judgment day (3 Nephi 28:9, 27-40).

You cannot have a total apostasy in LDS theology when Mormon scriptures show four people remaining alive and preaching the gospel until Jesus returns.

Jesus said his church would not be removed or destroyed from the earth: “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my

words shall not pass away” (Mark 13:31). “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Believe him.

The Church of Jesus Christ in Former Times

Page 101 – We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

The offices of High Priests, Patriarchs, Seventies, and Quorums were not part of the early church organization.

Page 101 – Today the Church of Jesus has been restored and is called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Bible teaches born-again believers are the “body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:22-23). The church is not a religious denomination. Some of her members have been called “Christians” (Acts 11:26), “Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5), and “saints” (2 Cor. 13:13). His church is known as the “church of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), the “church of God” (1 Cor. 1:2), and the “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23).

Authority from God

Page 102 – Jesus appointed Peter chief Apostle and gave him the keys to seal blessings both on earth and in heaven.

But Jesus gave these keys to all the disciples. Let’s look at Matthew 18:1-18 very closely: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall

loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Jesus is addressing the disciples that were present, not just Peter.

Ordinances Performed for the Dead

Page 104 – Between his death and resurrection, Jesus went among the spirits of those who had died.

Latter-day Saints believe this is a reference to 1 Peter 3:19. But when did Jesus actually preach to the spirits in prison?

“Which sometime were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Pet. 3:20). The answer is given by the word “when.”

The spirits of those men, to whom Noah had preached, were in prison because they had rejected his message. They were awaiting judgment—they were lost. But Christ did not preach to them after he died on the cross. He preached through Noah “when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” Noah had preached the Word of God for 120 years. He saved his family and no one else. It was the Spirit of God (of Christ) who spoke through Noah in those days.

Latter-day Saints also use 1 Peter 4:6 to teach salvation for the dead. It says, “For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” Notice the tense of “was” and “are.” The gospel was preached when they were alive but they are now dead.

Here is another example to explain what Peter meant. Suppose you have an evangelist called John Doe. In 1970, John preaches in a stadium to about ten thousand seniors. In the year 2000, these senior people have died. Therefore, John preached the gospel to those that are dead. It's that simple.

The view that deceased human beings can hear and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit world, and through proxied ordinances performed for them on earth attain eternal life in the presence of God, is one of the distinctive doctrines of the LDS Church that separates it from historical Christianity.

Since proxy baptism is not taught in the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints have gone to the Bible looking for a part of the "fulness of the gospel" that Joseph Smith said the Book of Mormon contained. The Bible does make a reference to baptism for the dead but people have missed what the apostle Paul was talking about.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29).

Paul is arguing that if Christ is not risen and is still dead, why are the other people still being baptized for the dead. Weren't these actions evident that they also believed in the resurrection? If not, why did these non-Christians practice it? Paul uses the references of "we" (Christian believers) versus "they" (non-believers) in this chapter. Please note that.

In either case, this verse in 1 Corinthians cannot fairly be used to prove the early Christians baptized for their dead.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

The expression “to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children” is a common one used by Latter-day Saints to refer to proxy baptism for the dead. The living person is proxy-baptized for someone who has died. This can either be a living father towards his dead son or a living son towards his dead father. This would make sense in light of the words quoted.

But let’s examine the passage in Doctrine and Covenants 98:16-17. Verse 16 is quoted above but verse 17 says, “And again, the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets, and the prophets unto the Jews; lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me.”

There is no mention of Gentiles or Lamanites. Besides, why would dead prophets need to receive proxy baptism? This is the point of the verse. It is speaking about living Jews unto dead prophets or living prophets unto dead Jews.

The verse says children to their fathers—not living people to unrelated dead people. The link is hereditary.

Plus, I cannot find a reference to indicate that the people in verse 16 are deceased. Can you?

The Book of Mormon teaches those who die without hearing the gospel, the primary candidates for baptism for the dead, are alive in Christ and therefore do not need baptism.

Moroni 8:22 declares those who die without knowledge of the gospel are like children who die in infancy: “For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also they that are without the law. For the power of the redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is

not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing.”

The Book of Mormon also teaches little children who have died without baptism are saved (Moroni 8:12-13).

On the same grounds by which the Book of Mormon rejects the baptism of living infants, baptism for those who die in ignorance of the gospel would also have to be rejected. It is unclear why Mormons are getting baptized by proxy for those who have died without knowing the gospel and having the law.

Baptism for these two classes of individuals is condemned: “But it is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works” (Moroni 8:23).

The Book of Mormon teaches baptism is a covenant for mortal life: “And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said, Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead, as to the mortal body” (Mosiah 18:13). Baptism is not a covenant for the dead.

Joseph Smith said, “All who have died without a knowledge of the gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God” (D&C 137:7). These are saved without proxied ordinances apparently.

There is also a contradiction in Mormon teachings on the reason for the need of baptism.

The Book of Mormon teaches baptism is for the remission of sins (3 Nephi 12:2; Moroni 8:11). But Joseph Smith later taught remission of sins is through repentance, good works, and receiving the Spirit of Christ before being received into the church by baptism (D&C 20:37).

The Church of Jesus Christ in the Americas

Page 105 – After Jesus was resurrected, he visited the people in the Americas and organized his church among them (3 Nephi 11-28). Then he left them and ascended into heaven.

Ether 12:7-12 says Jesus did not appear to the Nephites until after they had faith. But another Mormon prophet records that Jesus appeared to those who did not have faith.

There are several examples of this: the Nephites were in disputations amongst themselves after the proper manner of how to baptize someone (3 Nephi 11:22, 28). They didn't even believe in Jesus when they first heard and saw him come down from heaven (3 Nephi 11:8). After seeing and hearing him, they still didn't believe so he had to invite all the people to come up to him, one by one, to touch him (3 Nephi 11:15-16). They also lacked faith in Christ's ability to heal. When he appeared, they did not bring the sick and the lame to him for healing until after he told them to do so (3 Nephi 17:7-9).

In the days of Christ's mortal ministry in Palestine, people had faith to bring the sick and the demon-possessed to Jesus. They did not have to be told to bring them for healing because they already had faith in Christ's ability to heal.

Apostasy from the True Church

Page 105 – More and more error crept into Church doctrine, and soon the destruction of the Church was complete. The period of time when the true Church no longer existed on earth is called the Great Apostasy.

The LDS Church teaches Christ's church was destroyed, even though Jesus taught his church would exist for all time (Matt. 16:18). Apostle Paul wrote, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end Amen" (Eph. 3:21). This could not be true if there was a universal apostasy of the church for several centuries.

1 Timothy 4:1 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

Indeed, some have fallen away, but the gates of hell would not prevail against the church founded on Jesus Christ.

As discussed earlier, there was much apostasy which swept through the Mormon Church. *Gospel Principles* does not mention this for some reason.

Page 106 – These people lost the understanding of God's love for us.

Christians never lost the understanding of God's love (John 3:16).

Page 106 – John the Revelator had also foreseen the time when the gospel would be restored. He said, "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth,

and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

This angel is said to be Moroni (*Gospel Principles*, p. 267), but Moroni did not fly in the midst of heaven preaching to those that dwell on the earth. Latter-day Saints would do well to read the next verse. The angel is preaching a message of “Fear God, and give glory to Him” and that judgment is coming, not a restoration of the gospel. If you read the rest of Revelation chapter 14, five more angels followed the first one, with more messages of judgment. This didn’t happen with the LDS story of the angel Moroni.

Joseph Smith apparently had some other ideas. It was four angels who had the everlasting gospel, and it was Elias (the angel ascending from the east) who was crying unto them not to hurt the earth (D&C 77:8-9).

Gospel Fundamentals also has some conflicting teachings on apostasy and apostleship.

“When an Apostle died, Jesus chose another man to replace him. Through the Holy Ghost, Jesus made known to the other Apostles who the new Apostle should be” (p. 95).

This is contradicted by *Gospel Principles*, wherein a reason is made to account for the supposed apostasy—“Because of the persecution, surviving Apostles could not meet to choose and ordain men to replace Apostles who were dead ... The perfect organization of the Church no longer existed, and confusion resulted” (p. 105).

It seems more like the two different LDS teachings have caused confusion instead, for the apostles did not have to

meet in these circumstances because the Holy Ghost would make known to them the new apostle.

Gospel Fundamentals says, “The time when no one believed the true teachings of Jesus and no one had His authority is called the Apostasy. Wicked people killed the Apostles and other leaders who had the priesthood. They also killed many other members of the Church of Jesus Christ” (p. 97). “When the people stopped teaching and believing His true teachings, Jesus took the priesthood and His Church from the earth” (p. 99).

But Joseph Smith said the apostle John would remain on earth preaching the gospel until Jesus returned again (D&C 7:1-6). The Book of Mormon also states three Nephite disciples would remain on earth leading souls to Christ until he returned (3 Nephi 28:4-9). A Christian should know that persecution only makes the church of Christ stronger.

Page 107 – 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (Apostasy predicted).

The LDS Church uses this section of the letter to the Thessalonians to indicate that apostasy was predicted in Christ’s church. Has she failed to apply the correct interpretation to the biblical text?

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thess. 2:1-3). This man of sin has not been revealed yet.

The devil is very sneaky. He will do whatever it takes to make you doubt the Bible. This can be termed personal apostasy. Have you succumbed to it? Or maybe he has caused you to worship an exalted man?

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (v. 4). The man of sin has not set himself up showing that he is God yet.

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” (v. 7). This is indicative of when the restraining power of the Holy Spirit will be taken away and then the man of sin will be revealed.

“And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (vv. 8-10).

The man of sin will begin a series of events that will result in the culmination of the great apostasy. Latter-day Saints may argue that this is not a literal temple, but what of the one which is planned for Jackson County, Missouri? Will it be a literal or figurative temple? I admonish you to carefully interpret the scriptures and not to mold them to fit your own opinion.

The Church of Jesus Christ Today

Page 109 – After the Savior ascended into heaven, men changed the ordinances and doctrines that he and his

apostles had established. The true Church was no longer on the earth.

This is against Christ's teaching that his church would exist for all time (Matt. 16:18).

The Pearl of Great Price says the gospel would be in the world until the end (Moses 5:58-59). Joseph Smith said the apostle John would remain on earth to prophesy "before nations, kindreds, tongues and people" until Jesus comes in his glory (D&C 7:3). The Book of Mormon says a similar thing about three special Nephite disciples.

The talk of a total and universal apostasy in the past is grossly overrated considering the words of the Mormon prophets and Jesus Christ.

Authority from God Was Restored

Page 111 – Peter, James, and John came and gave Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery lacked the key qualifications to hold the Melchisedec priesthood as previously shown.

Christ's Church Was Organized Again

Page 112 – The Church was organized with the same offices as were in the ancient Church. That organization included Apostles, prophets, seventies, evangelists (patriarchs), pastors (presiding officers), high priests, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

There are no high priests, seventies, Aaronic priests, Melchisedec priests, or quorums mentioned in the letter to the Ephesians as roles in the original church.

I can sympathize with the missionaries' view that their church is a restored church but I don't get this testimony when I read the Bible.

For instance, Luke chapters 9 and 10 reveal Jesus gave the apostles and seventy others authority to cast out devils and power to heal. The book of Acts also reveals many instances in which the apostles and other disciples had these miraculous signs and wonders.

When you study Doctrine and Covenants (believed to be modern-day revelations to the LDS Church), these signs and wonders never happened—even though it said these signs would be present in the Mormon Church (D&C 24:13; 35:9; 84:67; 124:98).

This is an important omission because signs and wonders are the proof of a true apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). While not all Christians have these miraculous powers, one would figure that the current fifteen living LDS apostles would have them in order to authenticate their ministry. But the so-called LDS apostles fail this criteria.

In addition, the New Testament church had their day of Pentecost. This was verifiable by unbelievers. The Mormon Church prayed to experience their Pentecost but it never came (D&C 109:34-37).

Other Important Truths Were Restored

Page 113 – We will be punished for our own sins and not for Adam’s transgression.

Gospel Fundamentals has a peculiar teaching about this: “All of us have broken commandments ... because we have broken commandments we have sinned ... because we have sinned, we are separated from our Father in Heaven” (p. 125). This is against the teaching of the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 3:11; Alma 12:22; 42:9). It states one is separated from God even before committing a personal sin.

Joseph Smith wrote that spirits were redeemed from the Fall before coming to earth as infants (D&C 93:38), therefore children are born sinless. The age of accountability for baptizing children is eight years old (D&C 18:42; 68:25-27).

Mr. Smith later changed his viewpoint when he wrote, “Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good” (Moses 6:55).

The *Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual* teaches only accountable persons on earth inherit this fallen state (p. 16), but later contradicts itself when it writes that all mankind suffers a physical and spiritual death because of Adam’s fall (p. 20).

However, the writings of Joseph F. Smith and the Book of Mormon reveal we all suffer the consequences of Adam’s transgression, even before committing our first sin.

“For he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents” (2 Nephi 2:21).

“For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall; and the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord” (2 Nephi 9:6-7).

The Mormon god wanted Adam and Eve to disobey him so they could fulfill his plan.

Temple-going Mormons are considered cut off from God’s presence.

The blood of Christ atones for “the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned” (Mosiah 3:11). “And he said unto them; Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death; and we are made partakers of misery and woe” (Moses 6:48).

“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die [Moses 3:17], and this penalty was to follow upon all flesh, all being helpless and dependent as he was in this matter. We are called mortal beings because in us are seeds of death. Death came upon us without the exercise of our agency. Jesus Christ ... is the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead, as he was raised up, so will he raise up all the children of his Father upon whom the curse of Adam came” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph F. Smith*, chapter 10, pp. 88-89).

We are penalized and cursed because of what Adam did.

“Christ was divinely appointed and sent into the world to relieve mankind of sin through repentance; to relieve mankind from the death which came upon them by the sin [transgression] of the first man. I believe it with all my soul” (chapter 11, p. 99).

Joseph F. Smith said death is a penalty (a punishment). Being expelled from the Garden of Eden was a penalty. Adam and Eve dying spiritually right away, and dying physically eventually, was a punishment for disobedience. Adam’s sin passed unto all mankind. We are all penalized in this way.

You are considered spiritually dead before you have even committed your first sin. The Bible teaches that you sin because you have a sin nature. Adam and Eve sinned when they disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden.

All mankind has the stain of sin.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

Latter-day Saints do not believe Romans 5:19. They believe instead that we become sinners after we sin.

As we all receive spiritual and physical death through the disobedience of Adam, the repentant receive the gift of eternal life through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is the meaning of the great curse (the Fall) and the great atonement (the Cross).

Have you ever observed a child who is eight years old or younger? Do you see their occasional fits of rage, jealousy,

covetness, and self-centeredness? They are subject to the lusts, appetites, and passions of the flesh even when they are young. This is due to their fallen nature.

Little children are said to have the curse of Adam removed from them and to be incapable of committing sins before reaching a certain age (Moroni 8:8; D&C 29:47), but another part of the Book of Mormon says they need the blood of Christ to atone for their sins (Mosiah 3:16). They have received this stain of sin and sinful nature from Adam's fall.

The Book of Mormon says punishment is the end of the law whereas happiness answers the end of the atonement. Punishment is in opposition to happiness (2 Nephi 2:10). Without the atonement, all mankind is punished forever by not getting resurrected when death returns the mortal body to the grave (2 Nephi 9:7). All of mankind has suffered the same punishment as Adam and Eve when they were cut off from the presence of God (Alma 42:1-2, 9).

If you don't believe you are punished for Adam's transgression, maybe you could explain why you have a corruptible body and are cut off from the presence of God even before reaching the age of accountability.

The Church of Jesus Christ Will Never Be Destroyed

This is an interesting statement because the LDS Church teaches the destruction of Christ's church was complete after the original apostles were killed (*Gospel Principles*, p. 106). Subsequently, the LDS Church teaches the church was removed from the earth occasionally (p. 98).

What is the church of the Firstborn?

Who are Latter-day Saints?

This is a designation that is probably unfamiliar to some members of the LDS Church. In Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-69, Joseph Smith gave a revelation that speaks about the faithful in Christ who are saved.

“And again we bear record—for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just” (v. 50).

Only the saved (the just) are mentioned. Biblically speaking, the unjust are reserved “unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:9), not to receive a kingdom of glory.

“And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son” (v. 57).

These are Melchizedek-type priests.

“Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God” (v. 58).

Those who come forth in the resurrection of the just are already gods in LDS theology. There is no mention of a lengthy period of progression after death.

“They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace. And he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion” (vv. 94-95).

Observe this carefully. All those in the resurrection of the just are gods who have equal power and dominion with God. They have already been exalted. If these words by

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Joseph Smith about the church of the Firstborn are correct, are women present as priestesses, queens, goddesses, and daughters of God?

“In its most pure form and perfect definition, salvation is a synonym for exaltation” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 257).

Only Latter-day Saints who have been sealed in a temple marriage can become gods. Married people will come forth in the resurrection of the just. Those who do not get married are damned because marriage is a law of God (D&C 132:4-6). “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15). “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:9).

8. The Gospel



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 18-23, Pages 117-156

Faith in Jesus Christ

What is Faith?

Page 118 – As we carefully study the scriptures, we learn that faith is a strong belief of truth within our souls.

Joseph Smith revealed some of the original Mormon elders gave a testimony that “Jesus lives” after claiming to see him at the right hand of God and hearing Heavenly Father’s voice (D&C 76:19-23). Their testimony was not based on faith, but rather on sight and sound. Is your faith based on someone you have never seen or does it depend on visions and sounds that you claim to have received?

Jesus taught our faith must be like that of a child: “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10:15).

Page 118 – To have faith in Jesus Christ means to have such trust in him that we obey whatever he commands.

Consider these two major commandments: “Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul.” “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Does your strong (or weak) obedience to these commands reflect your strong (or weak) trust in Christ?

Repentance

We Must Forsake Our Sins

Page 124 – By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them (Doctrine and Covenants 58:43).

How many times have you forsaken Christ’s two major commandments?

We Must Confess Our Sins

Page 125 – We must confess serious sins, such as adultery, fornication, and robbery, which might affect our standing in the Church, to the proper priesthood authority.

Which might affect? Doesn’t all sin affect your standing in Christ’s church? Also, it is unclear how Latter-day Saints decide on whether all other forms of disobedience (not obeying the Word of Wisdom or not keeping the Sabbath day holy for example) are serious sins to be confessed to a church leader. It should be worth noting that anyone who does not confess serious sins to a proper church official will not be forgiven (*Gospel Fundamentals*, p. 144).

How many “secret” sins have Mormons withheld from their church officials?

Gospel Principles tells us that breaking the law of chastity (which includes abstaining from such common dating practices as necking and petting) is an extremely serious sin (p. 251). Is necking and petting also to be confessed to the proper priesthood authority— since it is Satan’s way to deceive many and keep them from returning to live with God (p. 249)?

We Must Keep the Commandments of God

Page 125 – To make our repentance complete, we keep the commandments of the Lord (Doctrine and Covenants 1:32). We are not fully repentant if we do not pay tithes or keep the Sabbath day holy or obey the Word of Wisdom.

What about not being fully repentant if you don’t keep all the commandments?

Page 126 – Then spend the balance of your lives trying to live the commandments of the Lord so he can eventually pardon you and cleanse you.

Jesus pardoned sinners through his atonement. You do not have to spend the rest of your life achieving this. Besides, where did God ever use the word “try” when it came for us to keep his commandments?

Joseph Smith taught that instead of having faith in Christ’s blood to be cleansed from sin, we must keep the commandments to be cleansed: “That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins” (D&C 76:52).

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Instead of being perfected and sanctified by Christ's atonement, Joseph Smith taught one would be perfected and sanctified by the law: "Verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same" (D&C 88:34).

Paul wrote, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:11).

Joseph Smith revealed the law also makes you free: "I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free" (D&C 98:8).

Contrast this with the words of Paul: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:24-26).

The law did not make us free. It revealed we are under sin. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

When Should We Repent?

Page 127 – The prophets have declared that this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God. We should repent now, every day (Alma 34:32).

Mormon scriptures teach about a "first estate" (the period of time before we were born on this earth) and a "second estate" (the mortal existence on earth; a probationary period in which individuals prepare to meet God – Abraham 3:26-

28; Alma 12:24). But *Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual* says, “Those who do not have the opportunity to accept and live the gospel in mortality are given that opportunity in the spirit world, after they die” (p. 39). It seems the LDS Church has added a “third estate.”

Baptism

Why Must We Be Baptized?

Page 129 – When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, repent, and are baptized, our sins are forgiven through the atonement.

But *Gospel Principles* says, “We must spend the rest of our lives trying to live the commandments of the Lord so he can eventually pardon you and cleanse you” (p. 126).

The Book of Mormon says baptism is “unto repentance and remission of sins” (Moroni 8:11). Latter-day Saints do not baptize infants because it is believed they are born sinless (D&C 29:46-47). Doctrine and Covenants 68:27 says, “And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old and receive the laying on of hands.” If little children are not capable of committing sin until they are accountable (D&C 18:42), what sins are remitted by the baptism of an eight-year-old child?

We Must Be Baptized Before We Can Receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost

Page 131 – The Lord said, If thou wilt turn unto me, and ... repent of all thy transgressions [sins], and be baptized, even

in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, ... ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Moses 6:52).

Cornelius and his group were filled with the Holy Ghost before they were baptized with water (Acts 10).

Joseph Smith's revelation about water baptism differs from the biblical teaching.

To "come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves" (D&C 128:12). Consequently, the baptismal font was "instituted as a similitude of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble" (v. 13).

Water baptism is symbolic of Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5). It does not represent the resurrection of other dead coming forth from their graves. Jesus did not say people should be baptized in a baptismal font. For example, John the Baptist used the Jordan River. If the living are wont to assemble on the main level, the font should be one level underneath this.

Not understanding the context of the Old Testament object, Latter-day Saints have changed the meaning of the font which stands upon the twelve oxen. In ancient times it was used by the priests to wash themselves in (Exo. 30:18-20; 2 Chron. 4:2-6, 15). Currently Mormons use it to proxy-baptize for the dead.

We Must Be Baptized to Enter the Celestial Kingdom

Page 131 – Baptism is the gateway through which we enter the celestial kingdom.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

Joseph Smith saw a vision in which his brother Alvin was in the celestial kingdom even though he wasn't baptized: "I saw Father Adam and Abraham; and my father and my mother; my brother Alvin, that has long since slept; And marveled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set his hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins" (D&C 137:4-6).

Alvin obtained the celestial kingdom without being baptized.

"I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven" (v. 10). Apparently baptism is not the gateway through which such children enter the celestial kingdom according to Joseph Smith.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost

What is the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

Page 138 – Cornelius did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized.

Cornelius and his group received the Holy Ghost before water baptism: "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy

Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:44-48).

How Do We Receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

Page 138 – People who have been baptized and confirmed are given the gift of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands.

Cornelius received the Holy Ghost without the laying on of hands.

Page 138 – Every worthy elder of the church, when authorized, may give the gift of the Holy Ghost to another person.

Who gave the gift of the Holy Ghost to the disciples on the day of Pentecost?

The Gifts of the Spirit

Page 141 – Each of us had hands laid on our heads to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Joseph Smith revealed all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not know Jesus is the Son of God: "I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church. To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (D&C 46:10, 13).

Can you believe that?

The Gift of Believing the Testimony of Others

Page 145 – If the thing we are praying about is true, the Lord will speak peace to our minds.

No part of the Book of Mormon can be verified through history, geography, or archaeology at this time. In consequence of this, Latter-day Saints have needed to rely solely on faith and feelings to express their belief in its truthfulness.

Joseph Smith said, “Study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:8).

The Book of Mormon even likens the word of God to a seed. If the seed produces good feelings within you, one can be assured that the seed is good (Alma 32:28-30, 41).

There are some dangerous implications to these teachings.

What if a sinner does not get a correct feeling if we preach that Jesus atoned for him on the cross? This would then make the biblical teaching wrong, would it not? What about Muslims and Hindus? They would express similar feelings of their Quran and Vedas being right. But would this then make the Book of Mormon wrong?

What if your feelings are good but you are trusting in a false Jesus? If a religion’s holy book (another seed) makes you feel good, must it also be considered God’s word?

Do you see the danger in relying on feelings to determine truth?

Joseph Smith wrote, “When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you. If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand” (D&C 129:5). How can this test distinguish between an angel of God, a Jehovah’s Witnesses’ missionary, and a Mormon elder?

How does God reveal truth? The Bible shows it is not through feelings but through remembrance, knowledge, and wisdom (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; James 1:5).

Praying to ask God for wisdom is not the same as praying to know the truth through a feeling. A man conferred with God’s gift of wisdom will seek God’s will. In this case, he will seek to know if a teaching is true by comparing it to the Bible. Truth is revealed through understanding what has been freely given to us. The Holy Ghost teaches us so we can discern what is true by making judgments. It is knowledge, not burning bosoms, which lights our way to truth.

The Bible teaches that feelings of the Spirit are sometimes experienced as a burning in the bosom. The resurrected Lord visited two disciples who were on the road to Emmaus. “Their eyes were holden that they should not know him” (Luke 24:16). They were able to understand as Jesus expounded the scriptures to them. “And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight” (v. 31). They recalled, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (v. 32).

Their recognition of the truth was not based on feelings but rather on knowledge.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

When Latter-day Saints come to someone's home to share the gospel, they normally leave a Book of Mormon and ask the prospect to read Moroni 10:4—"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost."

In essence, they are asking an unbeliever to experience a burning in the bosom similar to Doctrine and Covenants 9:8. But the two on the road to Emmaus were believers already (Luke 24:19-24). They just had the truth reconfirmed to them by Christ. They were not unbelievers who relied on feelings to tell them it was true. That's a huge difference.

Muslims and Hindus also believe Jesus is a great prophet or teacher. If they prayed with a sincere heart, they would be led to believe the Quran and the Vedas is their respective truth and that the Book of Mormon and the Bible is a lie. Would Latter-day Saints call them insincere if they prayed with real intent and received such an answer?

There is a very subtle danger in taking the exercise of Moroni 10:4. People are forced into either viewing themselves as being sincere, having faith in Christ, having real intent, and coming to know the Book of Mormon is true—or the contrary—viewing themselves as being insincere, lacking faith in Christ, lacking real intent and coming to know the Book of Mormon is not a historical text.

Who would want to view themselves as insincere and call God a liar? This is like a psychological attempt to steer you into going where the author wants you to go.

As you investigate the Middle East, the Bible seems to come alive as you find some artifacts and historical places that are mentioned therein. When you study the ancient writings of Jerome and Josephus, you can also find external evidences of the Christianity mentioned in the Bible. These are just some ways in which we use our mind to correlate what God has recorded therein. Also, remember the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible.

People can be deceived into believing almost anything when they rely on feelings instead of examining the evidence.

1 Nephi 14:10 wrote there are two main churches—the church of the Lamb of God and the church of the devil. But another Book of Mormon prophet taught, “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God” (Moroni 7:16-17).

Based on Nephi’s text, how can a non-Mormon Church be a church of the devil and yet invite men to do good and to persuade people to believe in Christ (showing that it is of God) as Moroni wrote?

Why can I say Catholic and Protestant churches are really the church of the devil according to Nephi? Because Joseph Smith said all churches were wrong and Mormons believe their church is the church of Christ on the earth today.

2 Nephi 26:16 borrows from Isaiah 29:1-4 to insinuate the Book of Mormon would have a “familiar spirit” in the sense

Bible readers would see things in the Book of Mormon that they may already be familiar with.

There are a few problems with this.

Isaiah 29:1-4 is actually a pronouncement of judgment against Jerusalem. Ariel (Jerusalem) is the city where David dwelt, not North America. Back in Isaiah 28:15, God made a mockery against the Israelites who entered a so-called “covenant of death.” Apparently some of Judah’s leaders made a pact with the “gods of the underworld” if these pagan gods would protect them. They were involved in spiritism.

God warns us to avoid those having “familiar spirits” (Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:9-12).

Satan Imitates the Gifts of the Spirit

Page 149 – Satan wants us to believe in his false prophets, false healers, and false miracle workers.

Satan also uses false teachers. Only sinless people could perform miracles in Book of Mormon times (3 Nephi 8:1).

The Sacrament

The Covenants We Renew during the Sacrament

Page 155 – A person guided by the Spirit will have the knowledge, faith, power, and righteousness to gain eternal life.

Do you need power and righteousness to gain eternal life or does it come with simple faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16)?

9. The Goal of Work



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 24-35, Pages 159-228

The Sabbath Day

History of the Sabbath

Page 161 – Our prophets have told us that we should not shop, hunt, fish, attend sports events, or participate in similar activities on that day.

How many Latter-day Saints honour these prophetic teachings?

Fasting

Page 165 – Since the time of Adam, God's people have fasted.

There are no biblical references to indicate Adam, Eve, or their immediate descendants ever fasted.

Page 165 – Fasting is a commandment (Doctrine and Covenants 88:76).

Isn't fasting voluntary?

The Fast Day

Page 166 – One Sunday each month Latter-day Saints observe a fast day.

There is no day set aside for fasting in the New Testament. It is up to the believer's free-will offering to God. It is not a biblical commandment to all people.

Fasting Teaches Self-Control

Page 168 – When we fast properly, we learn to control our appetites, our passions, and our tempers. Solomon said, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

Proverbs 16:32 is not about fasting.

Sacrifice

We Must Be Willing to Sacrifice Everything We Have to the Lord

Page 173 – If we are to be a living sacrifice, we must, if asked, be willing to give everything we have for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

If asked by whom? What about giving everything you have for Jesus instead?

The church of Jesus Christ is not something that can be observed, like a building, on a street corner with emblems of worship. The true nature of Christ's church is spiritual. Jesus does not have only one representative on this earth—his faithful ones are all ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20).

Sacrifice Helps Us Prepare to Live in the Presence of God

Page 175 – Only through sacrifice can we become worthy to live in the presence of God. Only through sacrifice can we enjoy eternal life. We must be willing to do the same if we would earn the rich reward they enjoy (see Joseph Smith, Lectures on Faith, p. 58).

Only through sacrifice can we enjoy eternal life? Jesus taught we receive salvation the moment we believe on his name. Christians have eternal life right now—it's not something we are waiting for; Jesus has already given us the promise. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Eternal life is a free gift from God which you cannot earn. If you could, it would no longer be a gift. Would you also agree? Even the best we can do or offer to God is worthless before him (Isa. 64:6).

The apostle Paul identifies the stumbling stone for those who think they can earn eternal life through their works.

"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they

stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 9:30-10:4).

After pointing out the stumbling stone, Paul professes his heart’s desire to see the Israelites saved. Just as the Israelites established their own way to become righteous through the law, so too have people today created their own doctrines to follow a path to eternal life. This is because they do not know that love, grace, and salvation comes from God.

“No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law” (Rom. 3:20).

Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual has some peculiar thoughts on when Jesus gained the keys or power of the resurrection.

“On the third day after the crucifixion he took up his body and gained the keys of the resurrection, and thus has power to open the graves for all men, but this he could not do until he had first passed through death himself and conquered. Jesus ... had power over death ... and having that great power, by the shedding of his blood on the cross, he could redeem us and get the power of the resurrection” (p. 88, bullet points A.3 and B.1).

It should be worth noting that Jesus told Martha he is the resurrection and the life before he or Lazarus were even raised from the dead (John 11:25).

Work and Personal Responsibility

We Are Commanded to Work

Page 180 – In this century, a prophet of God has said, Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.

When Jesus said to “love God with all your heart, mind, and soul” and “love your neighbor as yourself,” were these considered “works” or acts of love? Shouldn’t God’s grace and love be the ruling principles in our lives?

The Blessings of Work

Page 183 – God revealed to Adam that in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread (Genesis 3:19). In addition to being a temporal law, this was a law for the salvation of Adam’s soul. There is no real division between spiritual, mental, and physical work.

Work was a law for the salvation of Adam’s soul? Since this same fate befell all of mankind, it would seem work is a law for the salvation of our souls too according to this LDS principle.

Alma 25:16 says, “Now they did not suppose that salvation came by the law of Moses.” It appears as if some suppose that salvation comes not by the law of Moses but by the law of work.

The LDS Church teaches “work” was actually a blessing for Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden. As stated before, this is contrary to a revelation Joseph Smith gave—all blessings are predicated on obedience (D&C 130:20-21).

It should be worth noting that when Adam was still sinless in the Garden of Eden, God gave him the work of naming the animals and being responsible for the garden (Gen. 2:15, 19). Adam and Eve were just not sitting around being idle. They were up and about doing God’s business.

Page 184 – “Let us realize that the privilege to work is a gift, that the power to work is a blessing, that the love of work is success” (Franklin D. Richards, The Gospel of Work, Improvement Era, Dec. 1969, p. 103).

What about the gospel of grace?

Page 184 – Work is a key to full joy in the plan of God. As we become like him, our work will become like his work. His work is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (Moses 1:39).

Since the LDS Church teaches Adam and Eve experienced no joy in the Garden before the Fall, the work they did before the Fall brought them no joy.

God’s “work” was also alluded to on page 9 of *Gospel Principles*—“Everything that he does is to help his children become like him—a god.”

In other words, our future work will become like that of the LDS version of Heavenly Father—to make gods and goddesses of ourselves and our future spirit children. When LDS members become gods, they will also offer a plan of

salvation to their spirit children on another planet because their spirit children will need to be exalted too. Mormon male gods and their wives will have their own realm in which to procreate sons and daughters. As one looks into the future of LDS theology, there will be many more sins, atonements, and possibly crucifixions.

Service

We Receive Blessings through Service

Page 189 – We must serve others to gain eternal life.

Jesus taught faith in him is the way to eternal life (John 3:16). Anyone with faith in Jesus Christ will, as a byproduct of love, serve others.

Opportunities to Serve

Page 190 – Our prophets have told us that a family is the most important unit in society.

While this is a noble statement, Jesus had something more profound to say: “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt. 19:29).

Family is not the most important unit in society according to Jesus. The growth of his kingdom is more vital. You cannot earn what you inherit.

The Lord's Law of Health

Page 192 – One of the great blessings we received when we came to earth was a physical body. We need a physical body to become like our Heavenly Father.

Earlier in the book, the reader was shown that a physical body was a requirement for testing. How can such a body be considered a blessing when the LDS Church teaches God initially gave them a physical body that was unable to procreate? Mormon theology teaches Adam and Eve had to disobey God in order for them to have children—because they had no blood in their veins.

The tenth LDS president said, “Mortality is the testing or proving ground for exaltation to find out who among the children of God are worthy to become Gods” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Joseph Fielding Smith, volume 1, p. 69). Since the Mormon Jesus made it to Godhood without meeting the LDS requirements of mortality and marriage, can other Mormons make it this way too?

Page 192 – We must obey the Word of Wisdom to be worthy to enter the temple.

Spencer W. Kimball taught obedience to the Word of Wisdom leads to “life eternal” (p. 195). *Gospel Fundamentals* says the Word of Wisdom is a law which must be obeyed in order for us to take care of our sacred bodies (pp. 150-151). Not obeying the Word of Wisdom will prevent one from obtaining a temple recommend. Therefore, they will not be able to enter a Mormon temple. The Mormon temple is the door to perform other ordinances and to obtain eternal life. The Bible teaches Jesus is the door (John 10:7). He did not give us a commandment about food and drink to obtain eternal

life. It is not what goes into a man which defiles him, only that which comes out of him (Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:15-20; Col. 2:14-16; Rom. 14:1-23). A temple or church does not stand between man and God because Christ is our mediator.

It is ironic that while Old Testament believers went to the temple to cleanse themselves from sin, the LDS Church states Mormons must be worthy before they can go to the temple. This makes you wonder how either of the two people in Luke 18:10-14 were ever qualified to get a temple recommend in the first place.

The Mormon necessity of temples denies the significance of a dramatic event in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (Matt. 27:50-51).

The spiritual meaning of the tearing of the curtain is not understood by Latter-day Saints. It signaled the end of our need for a barrier (the Holiest of Holies) to stand between God and mankind. Jesus became our High Priest forever. He is the only way to eternal life. The curtain is torn because of Christ’s blood. He was sacrificed once to pay the penalty of sin forever.

“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:11-12).

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body” (Heb. 10:19-20).

Do people need temples to approach God? The answer is no.

Temples (of clay and brick for example) were not part of the new covenant which Jesus established. Believers are the temple of God wherein the Spirit of God dwells (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22).

Man can approach the throne of God, without temples or priests, through Christ. This is not understood by many people.

We Are Taught That Certain Things Are Good for Our Bodies

Page 194 – Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine (D&C 89:12-13).

This passage seems to say God commanded that eating meat is only allowed in winter or in times of famine. Do Latter-day Saints eat meat in the summer when there is no famine? If this dietary law does not apply in our days, neither should one be forbidden to drink coffee and tea. Besides, consuming soft drinks with citric acid and excessive sugar in them, is more harmful than drinking caffeine. Maybe the LDS Church will restrict her members from drinking Pepsi and Coke too some day.

Well, it sounds like she already has. “The Word of Wisdom is a law of health ... anything harmful that people purposefully take into their bodies is not in harmony with the Word of Wisdom” (*True to the Faith*, p. 186).

Joseph Smith prophesied that those who disobeyed the Word of Wisdom would be slain by the destroying angel: “And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them” (D&C 89:18-21).

Have you known anyone slain by this destroying angel?

Charity

Charity is the Greatest of All Virtues

Page 197 – Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever (Moroni 7:46-47).

Is that the way the secular world would define charity? How can Christ’s love be said to endure forever when the LDS Church teaches the church disappeared several times from the earth (*Gospel Principles*, p. 98)?

Page 197 – Jesus was a perfect man.

Jesus was God in human flesh (John 1:1-14).

Page 199 – Jesus taught that we should give food to the hungry, shelter to those who have none, and clothes to the poor.

But Joseph Smith taught, “If any man shall give unto any of you a coat, or a suit, take the old and cast it unto the poor, and go on your way rejoicing” (D&C 84:105).

I have a better teaching. Take a new coat and give that to the poor person instead. Now that’s a reason for you to rejoice.

Speaking about a future “supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared,” he taught the rich nations would be invited first: “First, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble” (D&C 58:9-10). “And after that cometh the day of my power [after the Second Coming of Christ?]; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come” (D&C 58:11).

Some try to equate this feast or supper with the gospel being preached to a select group of people, followed by the rest of the world, without paying heed to the words “well prepared” in Doctrine and Covenants 58:9. Others try to say it resembles Christ’s parable in Matthew 22:1-14. A careful examination reveals the two passages are not the same. The invitation to take part in the marriage supper of the Lamb is extended to all, rich and poor alike (Rev. 19:9).

Honesty

Honesty Is a Principle of Salvation

Page 203 – Just as no man or woman can be saved without baptism, so no one can be saved without honesty.

The thief on the cross was not baptized and he wasn't considered honest by those he stole from—but he did have enough faith in Christ to be saved.

To Lie is Dishonest

Page 204 – When we speak untruths, we are guilty of lying. We can also unintentionally deceive others by a gesture or a look, by silence, or by telling only part of the truth.

Have you been told only part of what the LDS Church believes is true before you joined? Have you ever asked a Mormon a very specific question but only received a partial answer or silence? I view this as dishonesty.

“I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*, 2008, pp. 41-42).

Try asking a Mormon if he or she believes Joseph's teaching of the Trinity being three gods. Test their honesty.

Joseph Smith also stated in one of his discourses, “There is no other God in heaven but that God who has flesh and bones” (p. 42). This seems to be his belief about Heavenly Father. But don't Latter-day Saints realize Jesus and the Holy Ghost are God (as personages of spirit) before the earth was even formed? Or is this an admission by Joseph Smith that at one time in their existence Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not God?

Strangely enough, the LDS publication *True to the Faith* gives no definition of the Trinity. Neither is there mention in the definition of Godhead whether the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is one God or three Gods. It states, “The true doctrine of the Godhead was lost in the apostasy that followed the Savior’s mortal ministry and the deaths of His Apostles” (p. 73). It seems this aspect of the Godhead is lost from the Mormon Church. There is no clarity either in *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, *Gospel Principles*, or *Gospel Fundamentals*.

Since the scriptures do not say the Godhead consists of three Gods, it seems like Joseph Smith’s teaching (which is contrary to Isaiah’s) has proven to be the overriding factor. The Bible teaches there is only one God however.

Tithes and Offerings

We Are Blessed When We Give Tithes and Offerings

Page 210 – Latter-day revelation tells of another blessing for those who tithe: Verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming (Doctrine and Covenants 64:23).

You will be destroyed with the wicked if you do not pay your tithe willingly (see also *Gospel Fundamentals*, p. 155).

Missionary Work

The Lord's Church Is a Missionary Church

Page 213 – Missionary work began again when the Lord's Church was restored.

Christ's church was never taken away. Missionary work has been going on since Jesus established it (Matt. 16:18).

Missionary Work is Important

Page 214 – This is our first interest as a Church—to save and exalt the souls of the children of men.

How many potential new recruits would be lost if the message of becoming a god was initially taught to them before they gave any thought to joining?

How Can We All Be Missionaries?

Page 216 – We can do family history research and temple work to help our ancestors receive the full blessings of the gospel.

The dead cannot have the gospel preached to them.

Obedience

Page 224 – By keeping God's commandments, we prepare for eternal life and exaltation.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Mormon preparation involves several stages. One stage is salvation; the other is exaltation—becoming a god. The reader should take note of the words “we prepare for.” This implies a future tense.

Joseph Smith believed people who had entered their exaltation, under certain conditions, could still be delivered over to Satan until the day of their redemption (D&C 132:26). It is unclear why he believed someone could be exalted without first being redeemed.

The Bible teaches that sinners, at the moment of their faith in Christ, have eternal life. They don't have to prepare for it because Jesus has already prepared it for them.

10. How to Save Your Family



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 36-40, Pages 231-260

The Family Can Be Eternal

Page 231 – The first family on earth was established by our Heavenly Father when he gave Eve to Adam in marriage. Since then, each of us has been commanded to marry and have children so that through our own experience we can learn to be heavenly parents.

In LDS theology, God wanted Adam and Eve to follow Satan's temptation and get mortal bodies so they could begin to fulfill God's plan.

The LDS Church teaches you are being disobedient to God if you choose to remain single.

The Importance of Families

Page 231 – One of the purposes of marriage is to provide mortal bodies for his spirit children. When a man and a woman

bring children into this world, they help our Heavenly Father carry out his plan.

The LDS Church teaches everyone born on earth was already a spirit in heaven with God. When a baby is born on earth, one spirit from heaven is transferred into the physical body. If you are not married and having children, you are actually hindering God's plan to bring spirits into the world.

How to Have a Successful Family

Page 233 – President Harold B. Lee taught, “The most important of the Lord’s work that you will ever do will be the work you do within the walls of your own home.”

The most important work is to believe God. Besides, the apostle Paul was too busy preaching the gospel to be concerned about getting married and raising children.

Page 234 – The family is the most important unit in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Jesus had a different thought on the matter: “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt. 19:29).

Family Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Father

Page 237 – He is the priesthood holder and has the duties of priesthood leadership.

Female believers in Christ are priests too in the royal priesthood of God (1 Pet. 2:9).

Responsibilities of the Mother

Page 238 – Motherhood is a sacred calling, a partnership with God in bringing his spirit children into the world.

Let's not ignore the fact that fatherhood is also a sacred calling. He is a partner too.

Page 238 – Bearing children is one of the greatest blessings of all blessings.

If having children is one of the greatest blessings, why does the LDS Church honor Heavenly Mother with little or no devotion?

Is it possible that the Latter-day Saints have not made further mention of Heavenly Mother in the *Gospel Principles* handbook or elsewhere because it might make them unpopular in the general public if this was known? Would it also make them appear different from historical Christianity? How many other religions have a Goddess in heaven?

Eternal Marriage

Page 241 – Since the beginning, marriage has been a law of the gospel.

LDS revelation states monogamy is God’s standard for marriage (D&C 42:22; 49:16).

Joseph Smith revealed God is married to multiple wives and concubines (D&C 132:30-31). For those of you who may or may not be aware, “concubine” is defined as being “a woman who cohabits with a man, without being legally married to him; one inferior to a wife.” In certain societies of the past, concubines were contracted to a man as another wife—often having few legal rights and low social status.

Concubinage and polygamy are ranked with the sins of fornication and adultery (Matt. 19:5-9; 1 Cor. 7:2).

“Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines” (D&C 132:1).

This is called the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Joseph Smith said, “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees.” You must enter into this covenant to obtain the highest place there (D&C 131:1-4; 132:4).

Joseph Smith revealed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and many others were justified by God to take many wives and concubines. All people to whom God reveals this law must obey the same (vv. 3, 37-38).

The Bible teaches monogamy is God's standard since Adam and Eve. The doctrine of multiple wives and concubines is revealed to be a new and everlasting covenant because The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes the gospel was restored, and this particular doctrine also needed to be restored—thus it would appear to be new to people who never had it before. It should be worth noting that a monogamous marriage has always been the standard.

You are damned if you reject the covenant of polygamy. It is unclear how many wives Joseph Smith was married to. Some put the number at over thirty. Brigham Young was sealed to more. The purpose of a man taking many wives and concubines was so God could give him many blessings (vv. 4-6). The prophets also had the keys of this power—the power to take either wives or concubines, or the power to solemnize polygamous marriages (v. 7).

The Mormon Abraham would be blessed in taking many wives and concubines to procreate much offspring (v. 30).

This same promise is given to some Latter-day Saints if they obey God. Joseph Smith revealed the Mormon god is a polygamist who glorified himself in much the same way: “This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself” (v. 31).

The Mormon Lord issued a strong commandment to certain Latter-day Saints to do the same as Abraham did: “Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved” (v. 32).

If you don't do what Abraham did when you are commanded, you cannot receive God's promise: "But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham" (v. 33).

LDS theology teaches it was righteous for Abraham to take concubines—for he abided in God's law.

"Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods" (v. 37).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are now gods according to the above verse.

It would seem Emma Smith was grumbling about the fact Joseph Smith took other wives. God had a word for her to accept them. Joseph Smith was given all his wives so he would be made a ruler over many things (vv. 52-53). Emma Smith would be destroyed if she did not obey this commandment (v. 54). It should also be worth noting that Joseph Smith gave this polygamous revelation after he was already married to multiple women.

An obedient Joseph Smith would be blessed with hundreds of wives in this world: "I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds" (v. 55).

Eternal lives for a person?

Certain Mormon male priesthood holders could have ten virgins, for example, if they wanted to—provided all the virgins consented (vv. 61-62).

The purpose of having all the virgins to marry is to obtain the promise of Abraham, which passed onto Latter-day Saints (v. 31). Having many descendants through the use of polygamy and concubinage is God’s law according to Joseph Smith. It is the continuation of the works of the Mormon god.

LDS theology teaches God will destroy any woman who rejects this law of polygamy.

“And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God; for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law” (v. 64).

Living people who fail to get married in a Mormon temple can be married or sealed by proxy after death. This makes it possible for them to become gods instead of angels. A female who has died single can be proxy-sealed to a male and become his polygamous wife in the resurrection. But Joseph Smith revealed celestial marriage cannot be received in the spirit world by men and women who have died and gone there (D&C 132:18).

Things really get confusing since Joseph Smith believed only those who were married could take residence in the highest level of the celestial kingdom (D&C 131:1-4), yet he taught

those who were not married were damned (D&C 132:4-6). Will there be damned people in the two lower levels of the celestial kingdom? Apparently so.

These ideas are clearly against the teaching of the Bible. Christianity restored the sacred institution of marriage to its original character. Concubinage/polygamy is ranked with the sins of fornication and adultery (Matt. 19:5-9; 1 Cor. 7:2). In New Testament times, the bishop was limited to having only one wife (1 Tim. 3:2). Mormon Melchizedek priesthood holders could have ten virgins as wives (D&C 132:62).

Eternal Marriage Is Essential for Exaltation

Page 241 – Our exaltation depends on marriage.

A polygamous marriage is a requirement for exaltation as pertaining to the law of the LDS priesthood: “They [the virgins] are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified” (vv. 61, 63).

Adam and Noah are prime examples of people who existed when the world was sparsely populated. They did not practice polygamy to replenish the earth.

Polygamy was very important to Mormons in the past. Brigham Young even declared, “The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy” (*Journal of Discourses*, volume 11, p. 269).

It should be worth noting that neither Jesus nor his disciples taught or practiced temple marriage. The Bible records only one wedding Jesus attended, but it was in Cana of Galilee, where there was no temple. “In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36). The only eternal marriage the Bible describes is the one in Revelation 19:7-9—where the church is the bride of Christ. Will you take part in that marriage?

How does the LDS Church believe Jesus became a God in heaven before he was married? How could Jesus be God before becoming the first spirit child born of heavenly parents according to Mormon theology?

Joseph Smith wrote about another fate for those who remain single.

“Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever” (D&C 132:16-17).

The unmarried in this celestial kingdom will be in eternal service. They will not have the joy of families that others have. “How lonely and barren will be the so-called single blessedness throughout eternity” (*Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, p. 19). What is not discussed in Mormon doctrine is the destination of those faithful saints

who did marry in the temple but whose spouse was not valiant enough.

Joseph Smith taught the unmarried dead are damned (D&C 132:4-6), but yet he also stated they don't marry but remain as angels after death (vv. 16-17). Despite his teaching that celestial marriage cannot be obtained after one dies (v. 18), it is unclear why the LDS Church still performs these unions in her temples for single people who have passed away.

If she wishes to proxy-seal deceased people in the after-life in opposition to Mr. Smith's teachings, why doesn't her god honor these celestial marriages for those who have died single, thus preventing them from being damned and becoming angels?—depending on which of Mr. Smith's teachings you believe.

Benefits of an Eternal Marriage

Page 243 – We can be exalted as God. We can, at some future time, increase our family by having spirit children.

This is unbiblical. Lucifer also wanted to exalt himself to be like God: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High” (Isa. 14:13-14).

Joseph Smith taught humans would have the same power and dominion as Heavenly Father when they are exalted (D&C 76:95; 88:107).

Are you following in the footsteps of Lucifer? While we are not in the Garden of Eden today, Satan is still attempting to beguile people with the same desire, just like he did long ago.

We Must Prepare for an Eternal Marriage

Page 244 – Your Heavenly Father expects you to marry for eternity. An eternal marriage should be the goal of every Latter-day Saint.

“The gate to eternal life is celestial marriage” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 34).

Marriage was not the goal of Jesus or his disciples: “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” (Matt. 19:12).

You can be sure that getting married and having children is not essential to eternal life. Jesus said being a eunuch glorifies God.

An attempt is made to deflect Christ’s intended meaning in teaching us about the eunuch. “It is better to be a eunuch than to commit adultery” (Dr. David Pressley Bowman, *I Have An Answer*, p. 116). He missed the fact that one can commit adultery with the heart (Matt. 5:27-28).

Paul taught marriage and singleness are both gifts from God: “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. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than

to burn ... Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Are thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned” (1 Cor. 7:7-9, 27-28).

I have heard it said by some that Paul here is referring to saints on their two-year mission. But this is not so. Marriage is not the way to eternal life. Let’s reword it slightly for our Mormon audience: “If thou marry [during your two-year mission], thou has not sinned.”

Page 244 – Only members of the Church of Jesus Christ who live righteously are permitted to enter the temple.

A sinner, being an unworthy person, is permitted to go into a Christian church to hear the gospel preached and to be saved. In Old Testament times, unworthy people visited the temple to have their sins forgiven—they were not worthy nor were they considered active members. The LDS Church teaches you must be worthy and answer a series of questions before you can enter a temple. Do you see the difference?

Page 245 – Faithful Mormons, to receive a temple recommend, must recognize the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the only person on earth authorized to exercise all the priesthood keys.

Jesus gave the keys of binding and loosing to all the disciples (Matt. 18:1-3, 18).

Page 245 – Faithful Mormons will become gods (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-20).

The LDS Church teaches you will not reach godhood without a temple marriage. This is not the goal provided by Christ’s

salvation. To be with God and to worship him is the Christian goal.

Are there many gods and lords?

“For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many), But to us there is but one God” (1 Cor. 8:5-6). What is the proper context here? The apostle Paul realizes that these “called” gods are really not gods. They are pagan representations—for there is only one true God. These false gods are further referenced in Deuteronomy 8:19 and 11:16: “Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit” (Jer. 2:11).

Jesus makes a reference to Psalm 82:6: “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:34-36).

Notice the context. They “are” gods—they would not “become” gods. Christ identified the “gods” as the people in the Old Testament who received God’s law. They were not angels—they were human judges whose wickedness was severely denounced in the psalm.

It is futile to use Psalm 82:6 to prove one can become a deity. The verse says they are gods already, not that they will become gods. The reference is to wicked judges of the past. Can deity be sinful? No. Both Moses and Satan were referred to as “gods” (Exo. 7:1; 2 Cor. 4:4), but they were not deities.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isa. 43:10).

Latter-day Saints believe gods can be formed—despite the Lord’s revelation to Isaiah.

The Law of Chastity

The Power of Procreation

Page 248 – After the creation, God commanded each living thing to reproduce after its own kind (Genesis 1:22).

LDS theology teaches Adam and Eve could not reproduce until they disobeyed a commandment of God.

Page 248 – Reproduction was part of the plan.

Adam and Eve’s disobedience was also a part of the plan—since reproduction was God’s reward for disobedience. This is unbiblical however.

Page 248 – God married Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth.

Without polygamy it should be noted.

Why did God give them a command to procreate before the Fall when Latter-day Saints teach Adam and Eve were not able to procreate until after the Fall?

What is the Law of Chastity?

Page 249 – We are to have sexual relations only with our spouse to whom we are legally married.

Joseph Smith taught polygamy was also acceptable in some cases.

Breaking the Law of Chastity Is Extremely Serious

Page 251 – Unchastity is next to murder in seriousness.

It seems unchastity is almost equal to murder.

Is abortion murder when permitted?

Page 251 – There is seldom any excuse for abortion. One exception is when pregnancy has resulted from incest or rape.

This is a dangerous compromise with your salvation because Joseph Smith taught abortion (the shedding of innocent blood) is considered blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (D&C 132:27). If a woman is pregnant by rape or incest, giving the baby up for adoption is better than killing the child.

Those Who Break the Law of Chastity Can Be Forgiven

Page 252 – Peace can come to those who have broken the law of chastity ... through forgiveness.

While unchastity can be forgiven, Joseph Smith revealed murderers could not be forgiven: “And now, behold, I speak

unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come” (D&C 42:18). The Bible teaches the prophet Nathan declared David forgiven for the crime of murder (2 Sam. 12:13).

Temple Work and Family History

Page 255 – We must do all that the Savior commands us to do. This includes being baptized and receiving the ordinances of the temple.

Ordinances are defined as “sacred rites and ceremonies that are necessary for eternal progression” (p. 380). *Gospel Fundamentals* says, “some priesthood ordinances are necessary in order to return and live with our Father in Heaven” (p. 121).

Page 255 – The atonement of Jesus Christ assures each of us that we will be resurrected and live forever.

The LDS Church teaches everyone will be resurrected through the atonement. How does she define redemption and resurrection?

The Book of Mormon makes a reference to something called the “great plan.” It is referred to as the great plan of salvation (Alma 42:5), happiness (v. 8), redemption (v. 11), and mercy (v. 31).

“The Lord has described his plan of redemption as the Plan of Happiness” (“Thanks Be to God,” *Ensign*, July 1982, p. 51).

But Joseph Smith taught, “Through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the

dead. And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul” (D&C 88:14-16). Resurrection equals redemption.

The Bible teaches a person who places their faith in Christ receives salvation before resurrection.

Joseph Smith also taught redemption (resurrection) prepares one to receive the celestial glory (D&C 88:18). Not all people who are resurrected will inherit the celestial glory however. The LDS Church has also designated the terrestrial and telestial glories—those in the resurrection of the unjust will also be redeemed.

Joseph Smith revealed resurrection is necessary for us to receive a fulness of joy (D&C 88:14-16; 93:33). LDS theology equates achieving a fulness of joy with reaching godhood.

The Book of Mormon says all, both the wicked and the righteous, will be resurrected to stand before God (Alma 11:44). Will they all be redeemed according to the LDS definition of resurrection?

Joseph Smith said Lucifer was an angel (D&C 76:25)—an unresurrected being in spirit form. Then he said, “There are two kinds of beings in heaven, namely: Angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones—For instance, Jesus said: Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Secondly: the spirits of just men made perfect, they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory” (D&C 129:1-3).

Is Gabriel a resurrected angel or an unresurrected and perfect spirit? Why did Joseph Smith equate Jesus with an angel?

This revelation creates several other questions and problems. Are these non-resurrected men redeemed according to the Mormon definition of redemption? When did angels die and receive resurrected bodies of flesh and bones? Did Jesus really equate himself to an angel when he is higher than the angels? How can a non-resurrected being inherit the same majestic glory as Christ? Also, a previous revelation by Joseph Smith said just men made perfect took part in the first resurrection and are clothed with celestial glory (D&C 76:65-69).

Page 255 – Heavenly Father has asked us to perform ordinances for our dead ancestors in the temples.

Mormons believe these ordinances can help people attain salvation or exaltation to a god after they die.

Temples of the Lord

Page 255 – Only worthy LDS church members may go there. In the temples, they receive sacred ordinances and make covenants with God. These ordinances must be performed in the temples of the Lord.

Mormon temples are thought to be holy ground: “But if there shall come into it any unclean thing, my glory shall not be there; and my presence shall not come into it” (D&C 94:9). It was revealed that some Latter-day Saints, who are pure in heart, would even see God and his glory (D&C 97:16-18). This kind of reminds you of the Old Testament shekinah glory—but all the Jews saw it in those days. Also, it is unclear whether there are any “clean” Latter-day Saints who enter the temple and see God.

Old Testament priests could not remain in the tabernacle when the glory of the Lord appeared. It is safe to say the Lord does not appear in Mormon temples.

The Bible teaches making a covenant with God is not restricted to where you are in the world. Baptisms and remembrances of the Lord's Supper were happening everywhere possible. For instance, the Lord's Supper occurred in peoples' homes. Cornelius and his group were filled with the Holy Ghost in their home while Peter was preaching. New Testament ordinances are not restricted to specific buildings.

Our Ancestors Need Our Help

Can proxy baptism help the dead? Is there a second chance after death?

The Book of Mormon teaches mortal life is the time for people to prepare to meet God: "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors" (Alma 34:32). The mortal time of preparation is also called the probationary period (Alma 5:31; 12:24-26; 41:6; 42:4, 10; 2 Nephi 2:30; 9:27).

Mormonism teaches the spirits in heaven had to come to earth to obtain bodies of flesh because they could not progress while in a spirit body.

Moroni 7:16-17 writes, "For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man." But the Book of Mormon says a person loses this spirit of Christ when the devil seals someone with his spirit; when that person has procrastinated the day of

their repentance—that is, they did not repent while in their mortal (probationary) period.

Can you say that you will repent after death? No.

“Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world” (Alma 34:34).

“Then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed ... For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked” (Alma 34:32, 35).

Do you understand the phrase “this is the final state of the wicked?”

The wicked are sealed to go with the devil. After death, they wait in this state of darkness and fear until the resurrection. Then they are cast into outer darkness (Alma 40:11-14). But there are more spirits waiting to join them in this place.

Assuming one believes in the Mormon teaching that Heavenly Father had roughly 12 billion spirit children in heaven, 4 billion of these are already going to outer darkness because it is taught one third of the total rebelled against Heavenly Father at some council in heaven. These 4 billion spirit children were never to come to earth to receive a mortal body

according to Mormon teachings. Eight billion were to come to earth.

Proxy baptism cannot help the dead because the living do not know, nor can presume to know, the final state of professing believers or unbelievers who have died. Only God knows. They have no second chance—neither can they receive external help. They are lost. Evil spirits cannot progress in the post-mortal world (Alma 40:12-14). They remain in their same wicked state until the resurrection. You cannot help them no matter what you do.

“They who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy . . . shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end” (2 Nephi 9:16).

“And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore, their state became a state of probation . . . he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents” (2 Nephi 2:21).

You should repent while you are still alive.

“And it shall come to pass that when the second trump shall sound then shall they that never knew me come forth and shall stand before me. And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer; but they would not be redeemed. And then I will confess unto them that I never knew them; and they shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mosiah 26:25-27).

They are resurrected but not redeemed. Resurrection is not redemption in this case.

However, Joseph F. Smith contradicted these teachings of Alma and Nephi. He revealed labor could be performed for the dead and that the wicked spirits could actually progress in the spirit world. Contrary to the teachings of Alma and Nephi, he said the devil has not sealed the wicked at death and they won't all go to outer darkness.

Joseph F. Smith wrote about Jesus Christ between his death and resurrection, "But unto the wicked he did not go, and among the ungodly and the unrepentant who had defiled themselves while in the flesh, his voice was not raised. Neither did the rebellious who rejected the testimonies and the warnings of the ancient prophets behold his presence, nor look upon his face" (D&C 138:20-21).

These wicked are now said to have a second chance.

"But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead" (v. 30).

Doctrine and Covenants 138:31-34 teaches the gospel was to be preached to "those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets." Everything was taught to them "in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

Contrary to them having a final state of being sealed to the devil (Alma 34:32, 35), Joseph Smith revealed the telestial world inhabitants are cast into hell and are not redeemed from the devil until their resurrection (D&C 76:84-85).

Reading further in section 76, Joseph Smith also revealed these telestial world inhabitants (made up of liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers) would receive mansions prepared for them (v. 111).

“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 Cor. 6:9-10). Joseph Smith was deceived.

Gospel Fundamentals has a peculiar teaching on how we learn to become like God. “Only with bodies of flesh and bones can we learn the things we need to know to become like Him” (pp. 150, 161). So, how do those in the spirit world learn to become like God when they need bodies of flesh and bones in order to learn? Also, how did the spirits learn and prepare themselves before coming to earth when they did not have bodies of flesh and bones?

Joseph Smith had a different revelation about who would hear the gospel. He said Jesus visited and preached the gospel to those in the spirit prison who would inherit the terrestrial glory (D&C 76:71-78).

The Pearl of Great Price also contradicts the teachings of both Josephs. The wicked could not have the gospel preached to them or have the opportunity to accept ordinances performed for them.

“And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day” (Moses 7:1, 56-57). The good spirits are said to have been caught up to the right hand of God while the wicked spirits remained in darkness. This reiterates what Alma said earlier.

What happens in the time interval between death and resurrection? Will some hear the gospel again after death and repent?

Again, the Book of Mormon says no.

“Salvation would only come to those who put their trust in Jesus, keep his commandments, and continue in the faith until the end of his life. I mean the life of the mortal body. Neither are there any conditions whereby man can be saved except the conditions which I have told you” (Mosiah 4:6-8).

Joseph F. Smith did not agree with the teaching of the Bible either. We find another contradictory teaching in the LDS booklet called the *Plan of Salvation*: “At death, your spirit will leave your body and go to the spirit world, which is a place of learning and preparation” (p. 10). Recall again that the Mormon Church teaches spirits had to come to earth to obtain mortal bodies because they could not learn or prepare in their spirit bodies (*Gospel Fundamentals*, pp. 150, 161).

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

Also, study the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16). The beggar was carried away by angels into Abraham’s bosom. The rich man went to hell. There was no escape from hell. If you study Abraham’s condition, you will see that he

is not in bondage like Joseph F. Smith revealed disembodied spirits are in (D&C 138:41, 50).

Identify Our Ancestors

Page 258 – We need to know their names.

If knowing their names is important, why are the wishes of the dead not an important consideration? How do Latter-day Saints know if that person in the spirit world wants to be baptized? Why perform the ordinance of a proxy marriage if the spirit wished to remain single?

What if a Mormon couple did not get married in a temple during their mortal life because they did not want to be sealed forever according to LDS theology? If you could perform an ordinance to seal them, would you do so against their wishes?

Find Out Which Ancestors Need Temple Ordinances Performed

Page 258 – Temple ordinances have been performed for the dead since the early days of the Church.

The early disciples did not baptize for the dead. Living people were baptized unto the living Christ.

Make Certain the Ordinances Are Performed

Page 259 – If it is not possible for us to go to the temple to participate in the ordinances, the temple will arrange to have the ordinances performed by other church members.

Is this called second-hand proxy baptism?

The Bible teaches salvation is a matter between God and the individual. You cannot proxy-save someone. It is appointed unto men to die once and then the judgment. Now is the time for salvation. It is too late after death—there is no second chance.

Joseph Smith said we need to baptize for the dead: “Their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15).

He misquotes the Bible in the above verse: “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:40).

What is the proper context here? Who are “they?”

“Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (vv. 35-38).

Who are Latter-day Saints?

These people are believers in Christ—they are already saved. Why does the LDS Church believe they have to be baptized again after they have died?

11. The Second Coming



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 41-44, Pages 265-286

Signs of the Second Coming

The Restoration of the Gospel

Page 267 – Prophets of old foretold the restoration of the gospel. The Apostle John saw that the gospel would be restored by an angel (Revelation 14:6-7). In fulfillment of this prophecy, the angel Moroni and other heavenly visitors brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to Joseph Smith.

The angel Moroni did not fly in the midst of heaven preaching to those which dwell on the earth. The angel is preaching a message of “Fear God, and give glory to Him” and that judgment is coming, not a restoration of the gospel. Also, five other angels followed this one. They do not bring the gospel to Joseph Smith. They are bringing judgment instead (Rev. 14:8-20).

The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

Did the Bible prophesy the coming of the Book of Mormon?

Page 267 – Isaiah (29:4-18) and Ezekiel (37:16-20) foresaw the coming of the Book of Mormon.

It would be wise to do a careful analysis of these passages. Ezekiel talks about the re-gathering of the tribes of Israel. Isaiah does not talk about the Book of Mormon. “And in that day, shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness” (Isa. 29:18). This would give you the impression that if Isaiah were speaking about the Book of Mormon, it would be an unsealed book. But verse 11 says the book is sealed—so obviously it is not the Book of Mormon. The book is delivered to the prophet Isaiah (v. 12)—but he did not have the Book of Mormon.

The Coming of Elijah

Page 267 – The prophet Malachi predicted that before Christ came the second time, the prophet Elijah would visit the earth. Elijah would restore the sealing powers so families could be sealed together.

Gospel Principles says, “Additional keys of the priesthood were restored by heavenly messengers such as Moses, Elias, and Elijah” (p. 111).

The teaching about the identities of Elias and Elijah proves troublesome for the Mormon Church. Elias and Elijah are the same person according to the Bible. LDS scriptures reveal two different beings however.

Joseph Smith revealed Elias would restore all things.

“And also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days. And also John the son of Zacharias, which Zacharias he (Elias) visited and gave promise that he should have a son, and his name should be John, and he should be filled with the spirit of Elias” (D&C 27:6-7).

It was the angel Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias to announce John’s birth; and later to Mary for Christ’s birth (Luke 1:19-26). It was not Elias.

Besides, how can Elias be visiting Zacharias when Joseph F. Smith revealed Elias is in the spirit world (D&C 138:45-50)?

It is thought by some that Noah and Elias are the same being. How can this be when both Elias (v. 45) and Noah (v. 41) are mentioned as being in the spirit world waiting for their deliverance (v. 49)? Noah is said to be the angel Gabriel (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 26).

Did Elias, Noah, or Gabriel visit Mary?

Joseph Smith revealed that earth’s temporal existence is divided into seven periods of 1,000 years each. This, he believed, was the proper interpretation of the opening of the seven seals of Revelation chapter 6. The angel Elias, not Moroni (D&C 77:9), would cry unto four other angels, gather the tribes of Israel, and restore all things during the sixth 1,000-year interval before Christ’s millennial reign (Rev. 17:1-2; D&C 77:1-9).

However, Mr. Smith failed to consider that a great earthquake occurred when the sixth seal was opened (Rev. 6:12-17). There is also no explanation in what year the sixth 1,000 year dispensation began; with the great earthquake to usher it in. He failed to realize the context of these seals, vials, and bowls are all future judgments upon the earth—in the times of the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 13).

Joseph Smith's seventh seal interpretation corresponds to the last 1,000 year period of earth's temporal existence (the Millennium period). If you read Revelation 19:20, the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire before Christ sets up his Millennial kingdom. They are never released from there. But when you study Joseph Smith's revelation, he fails to take into account that the seven trumpet and vial judgments take effect after the seventh seal period.

Joseph Smith's interpretation says the beast and false prophet are not in the lake of fire because Revelation chapter 13 has not even happened yet. But Revelation 16:10 shows the fifth vial judgment (let's not forget about the seven preceding trumpet and vial judgments) was upon the beast. His kingdom was full of darkness, indicating he is still on earth after Joseph Smith's erroneous 7,000 year interpretation. In the judgment of the seventh vial (after Christ's Millennial reign and after earth's 7,000 year temporal existence—if you believe Joseph Smith's revelation), the Bible shows the beast is still on earth. The beast and ten kings burn Mystery Babylon with fire. Joseph Smith's errors just kept adding up when he gave a wrong revelation about the seven seals.

Joseph Smith said, "It is sufficient to know, in this case, that the earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other—and behold what is

that subject? It is the baptism for the dead ... for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in” (D&C 128:18).

It is unclear from Joseph Smith’s teachings when this dispensation began (either 1820, 1830, or the date of this revelation). Also, it is unclear if the beginning of this dispensation of the fulness of times is equivalent to the opening of the sixth seal. If yes, maybe Latter-day Saints could explain the great earthquake of Revelation 6:12-17, which is triggered by the opening of the sixth seal.

About the book eaten by John (in Revelation chapter 10), Mr. Smith explained, “We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things” (D&C 77:14).

Is Elias, who will restore all things, the same person as Elijah?

To confuse matters more, the index section of the Book of Mormon under “restoration, restore,” says the apostle John is Elias who must come and restore all things. Are Elijah, Elias, and John the same person? Did John (Elias) visit Mary?

Doctrine and Covenants 138:45 says Elias and Moses, who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, are in bondage in the spirit world until Christ releases them. But the apostle John is living at this time.

Who appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? Was it Elias or Elijah? Or are Elias and Elijah the same being?

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Joseph F. Smith says Elias was in the spirit world before the resurrection of Christ (D&C 138:45). If you do a search for Elijah at <http://scriptures.lds.org>, you'll discover that Joseph Smith said Elijah was taken to heaven and did not taste death (D&C 110:13, 1836), but he said John and Elijah were with Christ in his resurrection five years earlier (D&C 133:55).

One will also be confused by the LDS web site teaching on Elias found at <http://scriptures.lds.org/bde/elias>.

It says Elias can have 4 definitions:

- (1) The New Testament (Greek) form of Elijah (Hebrew).
- (2) A title for one who is a forerunner.
- (3) A title applied to many others for specific missions or restorative functions.
- (4) A man called Elias apparently lived in mortality in the days of Abraham, who committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 (D&C 110:12). We have no specific information as to the details of his mortal life or ministry.

Seems like #2 and #3 are identical—both refer to “titles.”

Definition #2 breaks the teaching of Joseph Smith in Doctrine and Covenants 27:6-7. The Elias mentioned there is a person, for it records his name twice. The spirit of “Elias” is the spirit of a person, not the spirit of a title.

The problem with #4 is that it is based on speculation.

“It is evident from the questions they asked that both the Jewish leaders and the disciples of Jesus knew something about the doctrine of Elias, but the fragmentary information

in our current Bibles is not sufficient to give an adequate understanding of what was involved in use of the term. Only by divine revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith is this topic brought into focus for us who live in the last days.”

Elias is a doctrine?

The names Elias and Elijah refer to the same person according to the Bible. An honest truth-seeker is only led to confusion by believing the so-called revelations of Joseph Smith about Elias.

Page 268 – Elijah would inspire people to be concerned about their ancestors and descendants (Malachi 4:5-6, Doctrine and Covenants 2).

“Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4:4-6).

There is no reference to inspiring people to be concerned about their dead ancestors. This verse is talking about living people.

The Gathering of the House of Israel

The House of Israel Are God’s Covenant People

Page 271 – Israel would be a blessing to all the nations of the world by taking the gospel and the priesthood to them.

Jesus said nothing about taking a priesthood to the nations: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

The Bible shows Israel would be a blessing to all nations in that Jesus would be born through the line of the Israelite race. Initially, it was the Jewish Christian church that was preaching the gospel. Afterwards, it was a combination of Jew and Gentile. The blessing is Christ’s atonement for the entire world. Jesus descended through the line of the Jews—he is the blessing.

By the way, Latter-day Saints do not view people outside of their church as spiritual Israel because they only view themselves as God’s covenant people; with the opportunity to preach the gospel (*Gospel Principles*, p. 98).

How Will the House of Israel Be Gathered?

Page 273 – The physical gathering of Israel means the Israelites will be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise (2 Nephi 9:2).

The Bible agrees with this too. All the twelve tribes of Israel will be restored to their original lands of inheritance.

Page 274 – The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh will be gathered to the land of America.

This is not what the Bible teaches. These two tribes will inherit their original lands of inheritance.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

However, more than just the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh will be gathered to America according to the Book of Mormon.

Page 274 – When the Church was first established, the Saints were instructed to gather in Ohio, then Missouri, and then the Salt Lake Valley.

As previously shown, Joseph Smith revealed Missouri was the initial place consecrated and appointed for the gathering of the saints. He also revealed Latter-day Saints would fight to regain the lands of Missouri. By the way, God did not instruct Latter-day Saints to travel to Utah.

Page 274 – The ten lost tribes will receive from the tribe of Ephraim their promised blessings (Doctrine and Covenants 133:26-35).

One should carefully read this passage cited by the LDS Church. There is no mention of a land inheritance in the United States.

“Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows” (D&C 133:34).

When does this blessing come? Study verses 18-24. This happens after the second coming of Christ.

“And they also of the tribe of Judah, after their pain, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord, to dwell in his presence day and night, forever and ever” (D&C 133:35).

Do you see the contradiction between verses 34 and 35?

How can Ephraim be said to receive a greater blessing when Judah is sanctified in holiness and dwells in the Lord's presence forever and ever? I would consider this a greater blessing. The Book of Mormon also says there will come a day when he would no longer envy Judah (2 Nephi 21:13). Why would Ephraim be envious of Judah if he has the greater blessing?

Judah has the greater blessing according to the Bible—Jesus came through this kingly tribe.

The land “choice above all lands” (thought by Latter-day Saints to be America) was said to have been given as a land inheritance to the Jaredites (Ether 2:7), the descendants of Lehi (2 Nephi 1:5), and other nationalities (not of Ephraim or Manasseh) who would be numbered among “Israel” (3 Nephi 21:22-24).

The Book of Mormon records that Lehi left Jerusalem with his wife and sons. Ishmael and his family also departed with Lehi. The sons of Lehi married the daughters of Ishmael. The Nephites represent a group of people that are associated with Nephi, a son of Lehi. The Lamanites are those associated with a rebellious son called Laman.

Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh (Alma 10:3), therefore the Nephites and the Lamanites are predominantly non-Ephraimites.

Do you see the confusion when you try to make the Book of Mormon another testament of Jesus Christ? How can Latter-day Saints who come to America prove by lineage that they are even from Ephraim?

Page 274 – Every stake on earth is the gathering place for the lost sheep of Israel who live in its area.

The LDS Church seems to lump all people (the lost sheep of physical Israel and the lost individuals of all nationalities) into one general group. The lost sheep of Israel in the biblical sense is not a reference to Latter-day Saints spread throughout the world. Jesus told his disciples to preach the gospel to those Jews in the vicinity who were in a “lost” condition, not to travel and visit people who supposedly lived in America (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24).

The gospel message was extended to all nations, eventually coming to America in the course of time (Matt. 28:19-20). The “dispersed among the Gentiles” is another reference to the lost sheep of Israel (John 7:35), but these are literal Jews. The two groups of the uncircumcision (Gentiles) and the circumcision (Jews) will one day be united into a single fold with Christ as the Shepherd (Eph. 2:11-14).

Page 275 – Jeremiah 31:7-14 (lost tribes to come from the north countries).

It is uncertain why Jeremiah 31:7-14 is used as a reference for the lost tribes. If the tribes are coming from the north, where are they going to? Where are the north countries?

Page 275 – Revelation 18:4-8 (a voice will proclaim the gathering).

It is uncertain why the LDS Church uses this scripture to describe a voice that proclaims the gathering of Israel. Revelation 18:4-8 is talking about God’s warning to come out of the harlot system. This has nothing to do with Jews coming from all parts of the world into the lands of their inheritance and/or into the true church. This chapter of Revelation is God’s warning to come out, not God’s calling to come in.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Page 277 – The time had come for Jesus to leave the earth. He had completed all the work that he had to do at that time.

But the LDS Church teaches Jesus had not yet finished the work he had to do. LDS theology has Jesus going to establish his church in the Americas.

Page 277 – He was to return to our Heavenly Father until the time of his second coming.

But the LDS Church teaches that while Jesus ascended into heaven, he returned again to the land of the Americas. He then went to preach to the other lost tribes of Israel in other nations (3 Nephi 16:1-3; 17:4). Mormons also teach Jesus returned yet again to Joseph Smith in 1820.

A song, Praise To The Man, indicates Joseph Smith has ascended to heaven too and now mingles with the Gods (*Gospel Principles*, p. 359).

What Will Jesus Do When He Comes Again?

Page 278 – Brigham Young taught, “In the Millennium, when the kingdom of God will be established on earth in power, glory, and perfection, and the reign of wickedness that has so long prevailed is subdued, the Saints of God will have the privilege of building their temples.”

Brigham Young later contradicts himself in *Gospel Principles* where he says, “During the Millennium ... there will be non-members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

living on earth as well as members. Many will continue to believe their false religions and ideas” (p. 282).

But false religions are to be considered a reign of wickedness against God because they are ruining his perfection. In other words, these people will continue to have their own reign of wickedness in the millennial kingdom. But Brigham Young spoke about the millennial kingdom in which the reign of wickedness would be subdued. Do you see the difference?

Page 278 – The Saints of God will have the privilege of building their own temples and they will officiate for their dead.

What dead? The dead and alive “in Christ” were already raised at Christ’s second coming. This is what some have called the rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51-56).

Page 279 – Those who already have been resurrected and those who will be resurrected at the time of his coming will all inherit the glory of the celestial kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-70).

This is contrary to the Mormon teaching that not all people will inherit the celestial kingdom; they were either not worthy enough or they were not married. Others just didn’t make it because the devil possessed their bodies when they died (Alma 34:32-35).

We Can Be Ready When the Savior Comes

Page 281 – We can look to the prophet for guidance and follow his counsel.

Would you follow the guidance Joseph Smith left to his successors after what you have read so far?

The Millennium

Page 282 – A thousand years of peace, love, and joy will begin on earth at the second coming of Christ. Only righteous people will live on the earth during the Millennium.

How can you have peace, love, and joy when Brigham Young taught people would still be practicing their false religions? These wicked people will still be engaged in spiritual warfare against Jesus Christ by practicing their false religions.

What Will Be Done During the Millennium?

Page 283 – There will be two great works for members of the Church during the Millennium: temple work and missionary work.

What need is there for missionary work and temples when Jesus is ruling?

Page 283 – Many people have died without receiving these ordinances. People on earth must perform these ordinances for them.

Proxy baptism cannot benefit the dead as previously shown.

Satan Bound

Page 284 – Because of the righteousness of his (God’s) people, Satan has no power; wherefore he cannot be loosed.

The Bible says an angel cast Satan into the bottomless pit and he had no power thereafter. It was not because of the righteousness of God’s people that Satan had no power. It was because the angel cast him into the pit and sealed it (Rev. 20:3).

Righteous Government

Page 284 – Mortals, both members of the Church and non-members will hold government positions (see Brigham Young in Journal of Discourses, 2:310).

Journal of Discourses is a collection of sermons given by early LDS Church leaders.

You cannot have a righteous government when unrighteous people are helping to govern it. Only saints will rule and reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4).

Page 284 – At this time there will be two capitals in the world, one in Jerusalem, the other in America (see Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3:66–72). “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3).

Isaiah’s passage has nothing to do with the tribe of Ephraim or America. The law is symbolic of Judah (Gen. 49:10; Ps. 60:7).

No Disease or Death

Page 285 – Old people will not die or be buried but instead they will be changed from their mortal condition to an immortal condition in an instant (Doctrine and Covenants 63:51; 101:29-31).

But Joseph Smith revealed children would grow up and then die.

“In that day an infant shall not die until he is old; and his life shall be as the age of a tree; And when he dies he shall not sleep, that is to say in the earth, but shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and shall be caught up, and his rest shall be glorious” (D&C 101:30-31).

The Bible writes, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:50-53).

The Mormon reference is unlike the biblical one for they happen at different times. 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 is referring to when the dead and alive in Christ meet Jesus in the air before the millennial reign, not after as the passage in Doctrine and Covenants implies.

One Final Struggle after the Millennium

Page 285 – At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be set free. Some people will turn away from Heavenly Father. Satan will gather his armies and Michael (Adam) will gather the hosts of heaven. In this great struggle, Satan and his followers will be cast out forever.

The LDS Church teaches the angel Michael is Adam. Since Joseph Smith revealed Adam was exalted, how can the angel Michael be the god Adam? “I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof. I saw Father Adam and Abraham. They have entered into their exaltation ... and are not angels but are gods” (D&C 137:1-5, 37).

The Bible teaches a great fire comes down from heaven to devour Satan and his armies. There is no great struggle and no heavenly armies are involved. It is only God and his judgment by fire: “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev. 20:9). Does this sound like a great struggle to you?

Page 286 – Daniel 7:27 (Saints to be given the kingdom).

But Brigham Young taught earlier that church members (saints) and non-members (non-saints) would have positions of governance in the kingdom (p. 284).

12. The Root of Jesse



Who is the root of Jesse?

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes her prophet Joseph Smith is the root of Jesse and the righteous branch (2 Nephi, chapters 3 and 21).

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious” (2 Nephi 21:10).

Let’s pay careful attention to the phrase “his rest shall be glorious.” Who does it apply to and what is the context?

Joseph Smith uses the same words in one of his revelations about the millennial reign of Christ.

“And there shall be no sorrow because there is no death. In that day an infant shall not die until he is old; and his life shall be as the age of a tree; And when he dies he shall not sleep, that is to say in the earth, but shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and shall be caught up, and his rest shall be glorious” (D&C 101:29-31).

Do you see the problem?

The words “his rest shall be glorious” are applied to different times and different people. In one, Joseph Smith is living with a corruptible body before Jesus returns to the earth. In the other, a person is changed to have an incorruptible body in the millennial period (v. 25).

“What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter? Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days” (D&C 113:5-6).

Do you see Latter-day Saints gathering anywhere?

“Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah ... For Joseph truly testified, saying: A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins” (2 Nephi 3:5-6).

The *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* adds further reinforcement to the LDS belief in the prophet Joseph Smith as this promised one (the root) and the “righteous branch” (p. 380).

Joseph Smith often transgressed (D&C 3:6-8), yielded to the persuasions of men (D&C 5:21), was deceived by wicked men (D&C 3:12), and was not always able to discern between the righteous and the wicked (D&C 10:37). Are these the qualifications of a “righteous branch?”

Lehi was said to be a descendant of Manasseh, a son of the Joseph who was sold into Egypt (1 Nephi 5:14; 2 Nephi 3:4;

Alma 10:3). In 2 Nephi 3:4-16, Lehi claimed he quoted a prophecy by that biblical Joseph which said a latter-day seer named Joseph would be born as a descendent of Lehi's last-born son (Joseph). Lehi's son would be blessed by this covenant in the fact his seed would not be utterly destroyed, and that a great one among his seed (thought to be Joseph Smith) would rise up. The covenant with Lehi's fathers would be remembered (2 Nephi 3:3, 21-24). A "land which is choice above all other lands" was promised to Lehi and his seed—those of Manasseh (2 Nephi 1:5).

In the Book of Mormon, the heading over 2 Nephi 3 says, "Joseph in Egypt saw the Nephites in vision—He prophesied of Joseph Smith, the latter-day seer." President Joseph Fielding Smith, Elder Bruce McConkie, and many other LDS leaders claim this text is a prophecy of Joseph Smith (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, volume 5, pp. 182-184; *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 396, 700; *Gospel Fundamentals*, p. 105).

If true, Joseph Smith would be a descendent of Lehi. But Mormon 8:2-3 and Ether 4:3 indicate that all the Nephites were killed by the Lamanites—the principal ancestors of the American Indians. Therefore, if Joseph Smith's lineage was through Lehi, he would have been such an Indian. Yet Joseph Fielding Smith said, "Joseph Smith was of Ephraim" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, volume 3, p. 198). How could he be of Ephraim when he descended from Lehi (who came through the lineage of Ephraim's brother Manasseh)?

It should be worth noting how Jesus is the "righteous branch." Joseph Smith fails to compare.

"And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel" (3 Nephi 3:9).

Joseph Smith did not perform great miracles like Moses.

The LDS belief in Joseph Smith as the root of Jesse is also found in another teaching manual (*Book of Mormon – Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, p. 39): “Isaiah sees the latter-day temple and the gathering of Israel. The Lord will raise an ensign – 2 Nephi 15:26-29; 21:12. When the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith, he said that chapter 11 of Isaiah was about to be fulfilled (*Joseph Smith – History 1:40*). How is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ an ensign to all nations? (D&C 64:41-43; 105:39; 115:4-6).”

In the Book of Mormon, the introductory notes for 2 Nephi 21 say, “The Lord shall raise an ensign and gather Israel—compare Isaiah 11.”

Joseph Smith did have enough Christian influence around him to write about the ensign: “And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it” (D&C 45:9).

The everlasting covenant has always been the same—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for the sins of the world. It has never needed to be restored.

The Bible gives overwhelming evidence that Jesus Christ is the root of Jesse.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again,

Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. 15:8-12).

The apostle Paul is speaking about Christ.

The Gentiles will glorify God for his mercy because of Jesus Christ. Where it says, “Praise the Lord and laud him,” the context is Jesus Christ. He will reign over the Gentiles and the Jews. The Gentiles will trust in him.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (Isa. 11:1-2).

Isaiah is prophesying about the Messiah. Jesus is the righteous judge. Righteousness is the girdle of his loins (Isa. 11:4-5). Christ’s rest will be glorious when we are living with him (Isa. 11:6-10).

“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Rev. 5:5). “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16).

Jesus was lifted up from the earth when he was crucified. He would draw people unto himself as the ensign (John 12:32). He is set up as an ensign in the preaching of the everlasting gospel. His ambassadors are the standard bearers. Both Jew and Gentile will be gathered to Christ.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

The root of David is the root of Jesse.

Why can't people interpret the word of God properly?

13. Life after Death



Covers Gospel Principles, Chapters 45-47, Pages 289-305

The Postmortal Spirit World

Page 289 – The spirit world is a place of waiting, working, learning, and resting from care and sorrow.

The spirit world is not a place of resting from care and sorrow for the wicked (Alma 40:12-14). For the others that were considered righteous, their condition was viewed as bondage (D&C 138:38, 50).

The Divisions in the Spirit World

It should be worth noting that the Book of Mormon equates spirits with souls. These terms are used interchangeably. The souls will be reunited with their bodies at the resurrection (Alma 40:11-23). The term “spirit prison” has taken precedence over “soul prison” in LDS literature for some reason.

Page 291 – The righteous and the wicked are separated (1 Nephi 15:28-30), but the spirits may progress from one level

to another as they learn gospel principles and live in accordance with them (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 762).

Alma 40:12-14 indicates that spirits cannot progress. It is appointed unto man to die and then comes the judgment.

Page 291 – President Joseph F. Smith saw in a vision that Jesus visited the righteous in the spirit world after the crucifixion and appointed messengers to carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men (Doctrine and Covenants 138:30).

Joseph F. Smith also saw Adam and Eve in this spirit world. Spirits were organized to preach the gospel “that they might carry the message of redemption unto all the dead ... Among the great and mighty ones who were assembled in this vast congregation of the righteous were Father Adam, the Ancient of Days and father of all, and our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters ... Abel, the first martyr was there, and his brother Seth ... Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah, and Malachi were also there” (D&C 138:38-47).

Mormon elders also go to this spirit world and preach the gospel when they die: “I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption” (D&C 138:57).

Spirit Prison

Page 292 – The spirits of those who rejected the gospel suffer in a condition known as hell.

But *Gospel Principles* said earlier, “The spirit world is a place of waiting, working, learning, and resting from care and sorrow” (p. 289).

Page 292 – After suffering in full for their sins, they will be allowed to inherit the lowest degree of glory, which is the telestial kingdom.

Joseph Smith revealed a person can be redeemed from hell: “These are they who are thrust down to hell. These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection” (D&C 76:84-85).

This is contrary to the teaching of the Mormon prophets Alma and Nephi. The state of those in the spirit world cannot change. It is appointed unto men to die and then the judgment. They remain in their wicked state. Proxy baptism cannot save them (Alma 34:32-35; 40:12-14; 2 Nephi 28:22-23). The Bible teaches that the rich man who died could not be redeemed from hell (Luke 16:26).

The Last Judgment

Judgments of God

Page 294 – In the pre-mortal life, all spirits who were judged worthy were allowed to receive a body and come to earth.

But *Gospel Principles* says all spirits in the pre-mortal life came to earth “for yet they knew we could not progress beyond a certain point unless we left them for a while ... we needed to be tested and to gain experience. We needed to choose good over evil” (p. 13).

The Bible does not teach we existed with God in heaven before being born on earth.

Page 295 – Alma taught that when we die our spirits are assigned to a state of happiness or of misery (Alma 40:11-15). This is a partial judgment.

“Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them” (Alma 40:14).

They are not waiting to hear the gospel preached to them. God’s wrath awaits them.

Those Who Will Judge

Page 296 – President John Taylor said the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles in our own dispensation would also judge us (see The Mediation and Atonement, p. 157).

No. Jesus said the disciples would judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30).

Assignment to Glories

Page 297 – We will be assigned to the kingdom for which we are prepared. We will be sent to one of four places: the celestial kingdom (the highest degree of glory), the terrestrial kingdom (the second degree), the telestial kingdom (the lowest degree), or outer darkness (the kingdom of the devil).

The LDS Church did not get the proper translation of “glories” from reading the Bible.

Celestial

Page 297 – Those who inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, who become gods, must also have been married for eternity in the temple (Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-4).

Terrestrial

Page 297 – These are they who rejected the gospel on earth but afterward received it in the spirit world.

This is contrary to the teachings of the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

There is a peculiar teaching found in Doctrine and Covenants 138:34. It says the spirits in prison were taught all the principles of the gospel “that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

It is unclear why preachers in the spirit world are only trying to qualify others for terrestrial glory instead of a higher glory (D&C 76:73; 88:99) . It makes you wonder why the living Latter-day Saints are performing all the temple ordinances for departed souls today.

Another thing worth noting is that those in the terrestrial kingdom will live separately, without families (*Gospel Fundamentals*, p. 202).

Telestial

Page 298 – These people did not receive the gospel or the testimony of Jesus either on earth or in the spirit world. They will suffer for their own sins in hell until after the Millennium. These are they who are liars, sorcerers, adulterers, whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

Compare this with what the Bible has to say: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). This is the same place where the devil is (Rev. 20:10).

The LDS Church calls the telestial kingdom a place of glory whereas the Bible calls it a place of everlasting torment.

Upon careful investigation, Latter-day Saints seem to be confused on the destinations for people who commit certain sins.

The web page <http://scriptures.lds.org/tgt/tlstlglr> shows Doctrine and Covenants 76:81-113 is a reference to the telestial inhabitants (see also *Gospel Principles*, p. 298). In chapter 33 of *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, point F says, “The inhabitants of the telestial kingdom will include those who were murderers, liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers.”

But Doctrine and Covenants 63:17 says, “Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Do you see the contradiction?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:32-37 says the sons of perdition are the only ones on whom the second death will have any power.

But Doctrine and Covenants 76:102-106 describes these sons of perdition (those destined for outer darkness—D&C 63:17) as inheriting telestial glory.

Outer Darkness

Page 298 – These are they who had testimonies of Jesus through the Holy Ghost and knew the power of the Lord but allowed Satan to overcome them. They denied the truth and defied the power of the Lord.

These people are joined by one-third of God's spirit children who rejected his plan at the council in heaven. These were never able to come to earth in physical bodies.

Have you denied the truths of the Bible and allowed Satan to overcome you?

We Should Prepare Now for Judgment

Page 298 – The gospel is the law of the celestial kingdom. All the priesthood ordinances necessary for our progression have been revealed.

Some LDS teachings and ordinances are not even found in the Book of Mormon. If this is how Mormons view the gospel, it is missing from the cornerstone of their religion.

Exaltation

Page 301 – When we lived with our Heavenly Father, he explained a plan for our progression. We could become like him, an exalted being.

The LDS Church teaches God the Father was once a man who became a God.

“Through a continual course of progression, our Heavenly Father has received exaltation and glory; and He points us out the same path ... we shall eventually come in possession of everything that the mind of man can conceive of—everything that heart can desire” (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, pp. 3-4; *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 92).

Jesus is said to have followed a different path than Heavenly Father in becoming a God because he [Christ] was deity before taking on human form. But for some reason, you and I are said to follow the same path to exaltation as Heavenly Father. We are not Gods in mortal bodies now, but we are said to become Gods in immortal bodies some day—if we obey all Mormon teachings.

Since Mormons are following the same path to godhood, it does seem to indicate that their Heavenly Father was sinful when he was growing up in a mortal body on his planet. This should come as no surprise since Mormon males (currently sinful beings on this planet) hope to be worshipped as Gods one day by their spirit children on other planets, which they believe they will create.

“The undeveloped offspring (Heavenly Father as an example) of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages

and aeons, of evolving into a God” (*Religion 327 – Pearl of Great Price Student Manual*, p. 4).

Lorenzo Snow, fifth president of the LDS Church, also said, “As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may become” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1976).

Page 301 – The Apostle Paul mentioned that he knew a man who was caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2). From the scriptures we learn that there are three kingdoms of glory in heaven ... celestial, terrestrial, and telestial. Within the celestial kingdom, there are 3 further heavens or degrees (Doctrine and Covenants 131:1).

LDS theology either rejects or misinterprets the Bible. Paul is comparing the natural with the spiritual, the terrestrial with the celestial. Instead of viewing the biblical passage as three kingdoms, it makes more sense to view it another way – the first heaven is that of earth’s atmosphere (Job 35:5), the second heaven is that of the galaxies (Gen. 1:17; Deut. 17:3), and the third heaven is the dwelling place of God.

“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:40-44).

The celestial glory is symbolic of the spiritual body. The terrestrial glory is symbolic of the natural body. The contrasts

are grouped in sets of two, not three. There is no telestial glory.

The sun (a star), moon, and other stars represent objects of celestial glory. There are different glories in the celestial realm (various moons, stars, and planets) as there are different glories in the terrestrial realm (the plants, animals, and humans on Earth). Even humans have different terrestrial glories between them.

Joseph Smith gave the moon a terrestrial glory and the stars a telestial glory instead:

“And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one. And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one. And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one” (D&C 76:96-98).

There are some stars even greater than our own sun, but they are still considered as possessing a celestial glory according to the Bible.

One should believe the biblical meaning instead of following Mr. Smith’s error.

What is Exaltation?

Page 302 – Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He is a creator. We can become like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.

Exaltation in LDS theology is living life as a god. Exaltation in the Bible has another meaning: “Be still, and know that

I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth” (Ps. 46:10).

Page 302 – We will become exalted, just like our Heavenly Father. Exaltation is the greatest gift that Heavenly Father can give his children (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God’s greatest gift to man is his love through the giving of his Son.

Blessings of Exaltation

Page 302 – They will live eternally in the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (Doctrine and Covenants 76). They will become gods.

“They shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them” (D&C 132:19-20).

Page 302 – They will be able to have spirit children also. These spirit children will have the same relationship to them as we do to our Heavenly Father.

Do you see the implications of this teaching?

Who are Latter-day Saints?

Mormon males (with at least one wife) who become gods will be worshipped by the spirit children they procreate on their own planets. If they follow the same plan of Heavenly Father of our planet Earth, there will be sin throughout the Mormon galaxies forever. These gods may even have their own Garden of Eden, Adam, and Eve—and the cycle will repeat. The cycle will repeat yet again when their children become gods themselves.

If they follow the same path of Heavenly Father as mentioned by Lorenzo Snow, they will send their own sons into their worlds to atone for sin. They may even be called “Jesus Christ.” Multiple Jesus Christs and Lucifers—it appears the LDS Church has not thought things through.

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God ... for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 9:12-14).

Let us take comfort in the fact Jesus Christ is unique.

Recall the first of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Exo. 20:3-5).

From this commandment, it is clear Heavenly Father had forbidden the worship of other gods, either man-made or imaginary. It was also sinful when rulers such as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar set themselves up as objects of worship.

But Mormon males hope to set themselves up as objects of worship by following various LDS Church teachings. It should alarm the casual observer how the Mormons could proceed in the face of this clear and present danger. Deuteronomy 32:4 states there is no iniquity in God. All his ways are judgment. For those Mormons hoping to become a god, what will they instruct their prophets to tell their children? Will they tell them that they were once sinful beings who were redeemed by Jesus Christ, or will they tell them the same message of Deuteronomy?

We traveled down this dangerous path just to illustrate something that was not thought of in LDS theology. Only God is to be worshipped according to the Bible.

Requirements for Exaltation

Page 303 – To be exalted (to become a god), you must be married for time and eternity.

In addition to receiving certain ordinances, there are 17 other commands listed to be obeyed. There is no opportunity for a Mormon male to become a god without being married to at least one wife. One point of exaltation is to populate your own worlds through the procreation of spirit children. “Eternal increase” means having these spirit children.

There is no marriage after death according to Joseph Smith.

He said, “Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. For these angels

did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever” (D&C 132:16-17). These angels did not obey God’s command to marry.

If the celestial destiny is truly the highest glory as the LDS Church teaches, it is uncertain how the non-gods will endure being ministering servants of the gods for eternity.

But Mormon president Joseph Fielding Smith seems to have reversed things later when he wrote, “Therefore, through the mercy and justice of the Lord, any young woman who maintains her virtue and accepts in her heart all the commandments and ordinances of the gospel will receive the fulness of the glory and exaltation of the celestial kingdom. The great gift of eternal life will be given her. This gift the Lord has described, shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. All the gifts of exaltation will be hers, because she has been true and faithful, and what was denied her here will be given to her hereafter” (Marriage in Eternity, *Improvement Era*, October 1957; *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 77).

Recall that Joseph Smith said marriage cannot be received after death.

He wrote, “When they are out of the world it [the marriage covenant] cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there” (D&C 132:18).

Page 305 – 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. Joseph Smith taught: “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 did” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 345-346).

Joseph Smith’s god was a man who became a God. He believed Heavenly Father learned his salvation and exaltation after death. It should be noted, as stated earlier, that Jesus is the Eternal God who became man (Mosiah 7:27; 13:33-34).

God was not once a man who became a God. The Bible teaches God became a man: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1-14).

We can learn about our salvation before the grave.

14. Eternal Life and Salvation



The May 1998 edition of *Ensign* magazine reveals six different meanings for the word “salvation.”

I will only present some of the main definitions.

(a) Salvation is the free gift of resurrection that Christ’s atonement provides to everyone (Atheist, Christian, Muslim, etc) so that they may have their souls (spirits) and bodies reunited to appear before God for judgment.

(b) Salvation means escaping the punishment in the spirit world to inherit some degree of glory in God’s lesser kingdoms.

(c) Salvation is 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.”

Exaltation

Members of the LDS Church hope to become like Heavenly Father some day. They strive to become heavenly parents

and have spirit children. Faithful Mormons will some day be the objects of worship by spirit children they procreate. The belief that male Latter-day Saints will one day be worshipped as Gods was covered in *Gospel Principles* chapter 47 on page 302: “They will be able to have spirit children also. These spirit children will have the same relationship to them as we do to our Heavenly Father.”

Joseph Smith taught some people would be glorified to have the same power as Heavenly Father in the resurrection: “And he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion” (D&C 76:95).

The key foundational passage for the Mormon doctrine of achieving godhood is found in Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-20.

“Each one of you has it within the realm of his possibility to develop a kingdom over which you will preside as its king and god. You will need to develop yourself and grow in ability and power and worthiness, to govern such a world with all its people” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 29).

Mormon theology says faithful male Latter-day Saints will become gods to be worshipped by their own spirit children.

This is what the Bible says about the potential to become a God: “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isa. 43:10).

The Bible makes several references to us becoming like Christ, but we will not become Gods.

Eternal Progression

Other LDS Church teachings reveal the Mormon version of Heavenly Father and Mother also had to progress into becoming deities.

“Through a continual course of progression, our Heavenly Father has received exaltation and glory; and He points us out the same path” (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, pp. 3-4; *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 92).

Achieving a “fulness of joy” is equated to reaching godhood.

“We learned that if we placed our faith in him, obeying his word and following his example, we would be exalted and become like our heavenly parents. We would receive a fulness of joy” (*Gospel Principles*, p. 15).

“If we passed our tests, we would receive the fulness of joy that our heavenly parents have received” (D&C 93:30-34; *Gospel Principles*, p. 14).

The Mormon version of Heavenly Father and Mother received their fulness of joy through their parents. It is unclear from LDS theology who atoned for the sins of Heavenly Mother before she became a goddess.

Eternal Life

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints defines eternal life as exaltation (i.e. becoming a god). It is synonymous with one of her definitions of salvation.

Some related teachings are found on her web site at <http://scriptures.lds.org/gse/etrnllf>.

Gospel Principles says, “All good things come from God. Everything that he does is to help his children become like him—a god. He has said, Behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (p. 9).

“The life he [Heavenly Father] lives is eternal life” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 8).

Eternal life means being a god, being married, having spirit children, and creating worlds. The highest division of the celestial kingdom is the home for such individuals (D&C 131:1-4).

“Unless a man will adhere to the doctrine and walk in faith, accepting the truth and observing the commandments as they have been given, it will be impossible for him to receive eternal life, no matter how much he may confess with his lips that Jesus is the Christ” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 36).

“To bring man to eternal life is God’s work and glory. Eternal life is the quality of life which God himself enjoys” (p. 52).

“Eternal life is gained only by accepting Jesus as the Christ and keeping his commandments. Eternal life, meaning exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world” (p. 54).

“Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so that undeveloped offspring of celestial

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parentage is capable, by experience through ages and eons, of evolving into a God” (*Religion 234–235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, p. 167). The Mormon Jesus was one of these undeveloped offspring.

This definition of eternal life teaches the inhabitants of the two lesser divisions of the celestial kingdom are not considered as having eternal life. Neither do the telestial or terrestrial inhabitants have eternal life.

1 John 5:13 says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.”

Are Christians considered the sheep of Christ?

Mormon theology teaches that not all Christians are the sheep of Jesus Christ. The Bible reveals they are.

“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).

LDS theology defines eternal life as living life as a god (i.e. exaltation in the highest division of the celestial kingdom). This would mean that even many Latter-day Saints are not considered Christ’s sheep because they will not inherit eternal life.

Can single people attain eternal life?

It would appear not.

At the 178th General Conference of the LDS Church in April 2008, the sermon “Salvation and Exaltation” says, “No man in this Church can obtain the highest degree of celestial glory without a worthy woman who is sealed to him. Sealing ordinances are essential to exaltation. A wife needs to be sealed to her husband; children need to be sealed to their parents; and we all need to be connected with our ancestors.”

Elder Nelson then reverses his position and makes a statement that single men and women who do not marry in the temple will have an opportunity to be exalted too.

“What about those who are not able to marry in this life or those who cannot be sealed to their parents in this life? We know that the Lord will judge each of us according to the desires of our hearts, as well as our works, and that the blessings of exaltation will be given to all who are worthy” (<http://lds.org/conference/talk/display/0,5232,23-1-851-2,00.html>).

This teaching about single people being able to become gods is linked in the html version of the sermon to several texts (D&C 130:20–21; Rudger Clawson, *Conference Report*, October 1917, p. 29; Joseph F. Smith, *Deseret News*, May 1, 1878, p. 2; “The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 1996, p. 75).

The November 1996 article says, “I know I have been speaking of the ideal, and you may be disturbed because your life may not now fit that mold. I promise you that through your obedience and continuing faith in Jesus Christ and your understanding of the whole plan of happiness, even if important parts of it aren’t fulfilled in your life now, they will be yours in the Lord’s due time. I also promise you that you can have significant growth and happiness now in your present

circumstances. As a daughter or son of God, live whatever portion of the plan you can to the best of your ability ... Your desire to be a wife and mother may not have its total fulfillment here, but it will in His time as you live in faith and obedience to merit it.”

Then in 1957: “Therefore, through the mercy and justice of the Lord, any young woman who maintains her virtue and accepts in her heart all the commandments and ordinances of the gospel will receive the fulness of the glory and exaltation of the celestial kingdom. The great gift of eternal life will be given her [but another place says eternal life is a conditional gift]. This gift the Lord has described, shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. All the gifts of exaltation will be hers, because she has been true and faithful, and what was denied her here will be given to her hereafter” (Joseph Fielding Smith, “Marriage in Eternity,” *Improvement Era*, October 1957, p. 702; *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 77).

Then another: “There is no Latter-day Saint who dies after having lived a faithful life who will lose anything because of having failed to do certain things when opportunities were not furnished him or her. In other words, if a young man or a young woman has no opportunity of getting married, and they live faithful lives up to the time of their death, they will have all the blessings, exaltation, and glory that any man or woman will have who had this opportunity and improved it. That is sure and positive” (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, p. 138; *Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, p. 168).

These teachings are contrary to ones given on other dates.

(1) Joseph Smith gave a revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 132 that marriage cannot be received after you die.

“Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever ... when they are out of the world it [the marriage covenant] cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.”

Mormon couples who are married in a civil union, but not in a temple, will not inherit exaltation or eternal life. They will be single like the angels according to Joseph Smith.

(2) The sermon “Salvation and Exaltation” says, “This life is the time to prepare for salvation and exaltation.” You cannot prepare after you die.

(3) “Celestial Marriage is essential to exaltation. Without proper and successful marriage, one will never be exalted” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual* p. 75; *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 291).

“This holy and perfect order of matrimony—thus assuring the obedient persons of an inheritance of exaltation in the celestial kingdom” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 77; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 117-118).

“No woman can reach the perfection and exaltation in the kingdom of God alone” (*Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 77).

“Only in and through a family unit can we obtain eternal life” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Conference Report*, April 1985, p. 66; “To Please Our Heavenly Father,” *Ensign*, May 1985, p. 50; *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 78).

“The Lord has prescribed requirements for eternal life in the celestial kingdom. We must comply with the new and everlasting covenant of marriage” (p. 90).

(4) “Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, pp. 300–301).

(5) “Eternal marriage is essential for exaltation” (*Gospel Principles*, p. 241). “To be exalted, we first must ... obey his commandments ... We must be married for time and eternity” (p. 303).

(6) “The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly Father” (President Boyd K. Packer, *Conference*

Report, April 1995, p. 8; “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 8; *Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, Marriage for Eternity, p. 167).

(7) “Exaltation grows out of the eternal union of a man and his wife. Of those whose marriage endures in eternity, the Lord says, ‘Then shall they be gods’ (D&C 132:20); that is, each of them, the man and the woman, will be a god. As such they will rule over their dominions forever” (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, 1966, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 613; *Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, Marriage for Eternity, p. 168).

(8) “Because the restored gospel reveals that eternal life with our Heavenly Father will be lived in family units, we would be wise to place a high priority in this life on preparing for and developing rewarding marriage relationships and roles as effective fathers and mothers. If we have been regarding too lightly the inspired counsel of the prophets on marriage, we may want to reorient our thinking. All the prophets in recent years have made powerful statements affirming that all who have the opportunity should work to attain eternal marriage and develop an eternal family unit. Nevertheless, Satan will seek to have us do otherwise, and enticing voices will speak to us of worldly achievements and acquisitions that may lead us on dangerous detours from which we can return only with great effort. Small, seemingly insignificant choices along the way will have large consequences that will determine our eventual destiny” (*Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, A Union of Love and Understanding, p. 165).

This Mormon teaching implies you are actually following Satan if you choose to remain single; as an eunuch for example.

(9) “Marriage according to the law of the Church is the most holy and sacred ordinance. It will bring to the husband and the wife, if they abide in their covenants, the fulness of exaltation in the kingdom of God” (Covenants and Ordinances, p. 38).

(10) “Exaltation is eternal fatherhood and eternal motherhood” (Eternal Perspective, p. 81)

(11) “Exaltation consists in the continuation of the family unit in eternity” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:546; *Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, Eternal Perspective, p. 81).

(12) “Exaltation grows out of the eternal union of a man and his wife” (Marriage for Eternity, p. 168).

(13) “No man can be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God without the woman, and no woman can reach perfection and exaltation in the kingdom of God alone. . . . God instituted marriage in the beginning. He made man in His own image and likeness, male and female, and in their creation it was designed that they should be united together in sacred bonds of marriage, and one is not perfect without the other” (President Joseph F. Smith, *Conference Report*, April 1913, p. 118; *Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, Marriage for Eternity, p. 175). Single people are imperfect in LDS theology.

(14) “Only those who enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in the temple for time and eternity, only those will have the exaltation in the celestial kingdom. That is what the Lord tells us” (President Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report*, October 1973, p. 120; *Ensign*, January 1974, p. 100; *Religion 234-235 – Eternal Marriage Student Manual*, Mate Selection, p. 193).

This is not the first time there have been doctrinal shifts in LDS theology. The Word of Wisdom is another prime example. Originally, it was not by way of commandment. Today, it is—and all without a subsequent revelation. You cannot obtain a temple recommend without obeying the Word of Wisdom.

Is eternal life a free gift or something that must be earned?

“Resurrection, or immortality, comes to every man and every woman as an unconditional gift. Eternal life, or celestial glory or exaltation, is a conditional gift. Conditions of this gift have been established by the Lord, who said, ‘If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.’ Those qualifying conditions include faith in the Lord, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and remaining faithful to the ordinances and covenants of the temple” (“Salvation and Exaltation,” 178th General Conference, April 2008, Elder Russell M. Nelson).

There are many conditions placed upon Latter-day Saints before the Mormon Jesus bestows the gift of eternal life on them.

- (1) You must be baptized and confirmed a member of the church. No one outside the Mormon Church will inherit eternal life.
- (2) You must receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- (3) You must receive the temple endowment.
- (4) You must be married for time and eternity.

(Source: *Gospel Principles*, pp. 303-304).

Point 4 (also taught in the “Celestial Marriage” chapter of *Religion 430-431 – Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*) has been recently contradicted in the 178th General Conference by Elder Russell M. Nelson in “Salvation and Exaltation.” He said, “What about those who are not able to marry in this life or those who cannot be sealed to their parents in this life? We know that the Lord will judge each of us according to the desires of our hearts, as well as our works, and that the blessings of exaltation will be given to all who are worthy.”

Before you receive the endowment ceremony, you must be interviewed for a temple recommend.

You must obey these conditions to obtain a temple recommend:

- (1) Have faith and a testimony of God the Eternal Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. Have a firm testimony of the restored gospel.
- (2) Sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator. Recognize him as the only person on earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys.
- (3) Live the law of chastity.
- (4) Pay a full tithe.
- (5) Keep the Word of Wisdom. You cannot drink coffee, tea, or smoke.
- (6) Be honest in your dealings with others.
- (7) Strive to keep the covenants you have made, to attend your sacrament and priesthood meetings, and to keep your life in harmony with the laws and commandments of the gospel.

(Source: *Gospel Principles*, p. 245).

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In addition to this, there are other things Latter-day Saints must do to have eternal life. Some are duplicates of what has already been mentioned.

- (1) Love and worship God.
- (2) Love your neighbor.
- (3) Repent of your wrongdoings.
- (4) Live the law of chastity.
- (5) Pay honest tithes and offerings.
- (6) Be honest in your dealings with others and with the Lord.
- (7) Speak the truth always.
- (8) Obey the Word of Wisdom.
- (9) Search out our kindred dead and perform the saving ordinances.
- (10) Keep the Sabbath day holy.

To keep the Sabbath day holy, you should not shop, hunt, fish, attend sports events, or participate in similar activities on that day. This would also include not watching entertainment on television (*Gospel Principles*, p. 161).

- (11) Attend your Church meetings as regularly as possible so you can renew your baptismal covenants by partaking of the sacrament.
- (12) Love your family members and strengthen them in the ways of the Lord.
- (13) Have family and individual prayers every day.
- (14) Honor your parents.
- (15) Teach the gospel to others by word and example.
- (16) Study the scriptures.
- (17) Listen to and obey the inspired words of the prophets of the Lord.

(Source: *Gospel Principles*, pp. 303-304).

Are we saved by grace alone?

The Bible's teaching about grace is very different from the Book of Mormon's teaching.

“For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23).

Do you believe as Nephi did, that God's commandments are conditional (try to do what you can and then add grace to it) or unconditional (you must do all that God commands)?

Since Latter-day Saints never know when they have done all they can do, they never know that God's grace has been added to their efforts.

“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God” (Moroni 10:32).

Study this verse carefully. Mormons must first forsake all ungodliness, love God with all their heart and mind, and then will God's grace be sufficient for them.

The Bible teaches differently.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works,

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but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

The second president of the LDS Church said, “Every ordinance, every commandment and requirement is necessary for the salvation of the human family” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Brigham Young*, chapter 2, p. 18).

Can anyone be saved by following Brigham Young’s teaching?
No.

Who is saved? Should Latter-day Saints be afraid?

There are confusing opinions in the Mormon scriptures on who is saved.

One teaching by Joseph Smith says no one will perish, except for the sons of perdition. Those individuals who do not become gods will be delegated to the telestial, terrestrial, or two lesser sections of the celestial kingdom (D&C 76). Those who become gods will reside in the highest of the three divisions of the celestial kingdom (D&C 131:1-4).

Other teachings by Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon reveal that only the gods (those who attain eternal life) are saved while the others are damned.

“God has decreed that all who will not obey His voice shall not escape the damnation of hell. What is the damnation of hell? To go with that society who have not obeyed His commands

... A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone [see Revelation 21:8]. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man ... Some shall rise to the everlasting burnings of God, for God dwells in everlasting burnings, and some shall rise to the damnation of their own filthiness, which is as exquisite a torment as the lake of fire and brimstone” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*, 2008, p. 224).

“And the righteous shall be gathered on my right hand unto eternal life; and the wicked on my left hand will I be ashamed to own before the Father. Wherefore I will say unto them—Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (D&C 29:27-28).

The wicked (those who don’t become gods) are cursed with everlasting fire.

“Therefore, I must gather together my people, according to the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the wheat may be secured in the garner to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory, when I shall come in the kingdom of my Father to reward every man according as his work shall be; While the tares shall be bound in bundles, and their bands made strong, that they may be burned with unquenchable fire” (D&C 101:65-66).

The tares (those who don’t inherit eternal life—who don’t become gods) will be burned.

One finds a similar teaching in the Book of Mormon.

Alma 5:21 says, “no man can be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins.” In verse 24, we see that the saved people “have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white” (see also Alma 7:21, 25). These people are in the highest division of the celestial kingdom with God because they have reached godhood (D&C 132:30, 37).

If one doesn’t have a place in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham and Jacob, “they shall be cast out for they are the children of the kingdom of the devil” (Alma 5:25). “Behold ye must prepare quickly; for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life” (v. 28). If you don’t have eternal life in the kingdom of heaven with God, your kingdom is of the devil.

There are only two choices: eternal life or eternal death (2 Nephi 2:27-29)–“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life ... or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil ... look to the great Mediator ... be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life ... and not choose eternal death ... which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom.”

Those who don’t choose eternal life and become gods end up choosing eternal death—to go to hell and to remain miserable with the devil in his kingdom (vv. 18, 27-29). It appears the LDS version of the telestial kingdom, terrestrial kingdom,

and two lower sections of the celestial kingdom is for those who choose eternal death according to Nephi.

“I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction” (Alma 29:4). You are either saved to be with God in heaven or you are destroyed.

Joseph Smith seems to have been confused and offered up various rewards and punishments for those who didn’t inherit eternal life or godhood. Joseph F. Smith was also confused in that he believed the spirits in prison (those who would never attain eternal life) would qualify to enter the terrestrial kingdom (D&C 76:73; 138:34).

Like their predecessors Joseph Smith and Joseph F. Smith before them, Latter-day Saints today do not accept the Book of Mormon’s teaching on the probationary period—the time for men to prepare to meet God (Alma 34:32-35; 40:11-14). Instead, they believe as Joseph F. Smith—the wicked who rejected the prophets would have another probationary period—what some could call the “third estate” (D&C 138:21, 29-32). The Book of Mormon clearly explains the punishment for those who do not get eternal life and what happens to the wicked between death and resurrection.

LDS presidents have abrogated the scriptures, which they claim to believe in, and have substituted other destinations such as the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms.

Let’s look at other examples.

“But behold, your days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly too

late, and your destruction is made sure” (Helaman 13:38). “Wherefore, if ye have sought to do wickedly in the days of your probation, then ye are found unclean before the judgment-seat of God; and no unclean thing can dwell with God; wherefore, ye must be cast off forever” (1 Nephi 10:21).

The wicked do not have a second chance after they die.

Latter-day Saints should be very familiar with the verses that speak about enduring to the end and being saved to inherit eternal life (2 Nephi 31:16, 20).

But what they don’t realize is that the LDS Church teaches against 3 Nephi 27:17–“And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.”

Helaman 12:23-26 explains it again–“Therefore, blessed are they who will repent and hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; for these are they that shall be saved ... And I would that all men might be saved. But we read that in the great and last day there are some who shall be cast out, yea, who shall be cast off from the presence of the Lord; Yea, who shall be consigned to a state of endless misery, fulfilling the words which say: They that have done good shall have everlasting life; and they that have done evil shall have everlasting damnation. And thus it is. Amen.”

Those who are not in God’s presence (in his kingdom) are cast out.

The LDS Church, with her teachings about the telestial and terrestrial kingdoms, believes one can return from the fire if one does not endure to the end.

Who are Latter-day Saints?

There is also an altered interpretation of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:20-31). It is believed by some that this parable only applied to the time before Christ's resurrection.

15. The Pearl of Great Price



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, even contradicting certain Mormon Church teachings.

It may very well be that the merchant gained some wisdom, sold back this pearl, and received back all his former possessions. We'll examine why.

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.

This is from <http://scriptures.lds.org/bdf/flfdm>: “*With the eating of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve became mortal, sin entered, blood formed in their bodies, and death became a part of life.*”

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/gse/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

Who are Latter-day Saints?

(Teachings of Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith, 2008, p. 252). Study Genesis 9:12-17 for the correct meaning.

What you thought was the pearl of great price has actually turned out to be an imitation.

Trust the Bible as the word of God. It contains the only pearl that you will ever need to seek for.

Conclusion



Wasn't that an exciting journey? It is hoped that you have clearly understood who the true ensign is and that you will follow him as the way, the truth, and the life.

The LDS Church's Article of Faith #3 states, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

You should realize that no person, except for Jesus, can keep all the commandments. If you fail, by breaking just one commandment, you are guilty of breaking them all (James 2:10). Following a false ensign will lead you to a hopeless future with no salvation.

The deception did not begin with Joseph Smith and neither will it end with him. False prophets and false teachers have existed since the days of the Apostles and they will exist until Jesus returns to establish his kingdom.

Even before Joseph Smith was born, his parents were already victims of the wrong belief that the Bible was not God's reliable source of truth.

Joseph Smith did not believe the Bible was sufficient to determine spiritual truth therefore he lost all confidence in appealing to it (History of the Church, volume 1, v. 12). Even many so-called Christians suffer from this today. It

is my earnest hope that you do not become a victim of the devil's lies.

Salvation does not come about by the "gospel of work" mentioned earlier in this text.

Contrast the teachings of Brigham Young and the LDS Church with the words of the Bible.

"The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9:30-33).

Following a false ensign will cause you to stumble on the true one.

Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. We are justified through our faith and not by observing the law (Rom. 3:20-28; 4:20-25). Faith is the sole condition of salvation; saving faith produces good works. Faith without works is evidence of a dead faith.

"Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21).

Leave your "works of flesh" behind you. Abraham once cried out, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" It was difficult for Abraham to let go of a son born outside of faith. You must let go of such works, otherwise you will continue to walk in the flesh and it will war with the Spirit.

Instead of trusting in your good works, put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Once you realize you cannot become perfect and believe instead that Jesus' perfection has been

imparted to you, then you can live your life to the fullest for him and with him in eternity.

Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (vv. 28-29).

A terrifying hell awaits those who preach a false Jesus and a false gospel.

Trust the root of Jesse and the banner of mercy and truth that we find in Jesus and his gospel of love and grace. Don’t let your unbelief prevent you from entering into Christ’s rest.

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