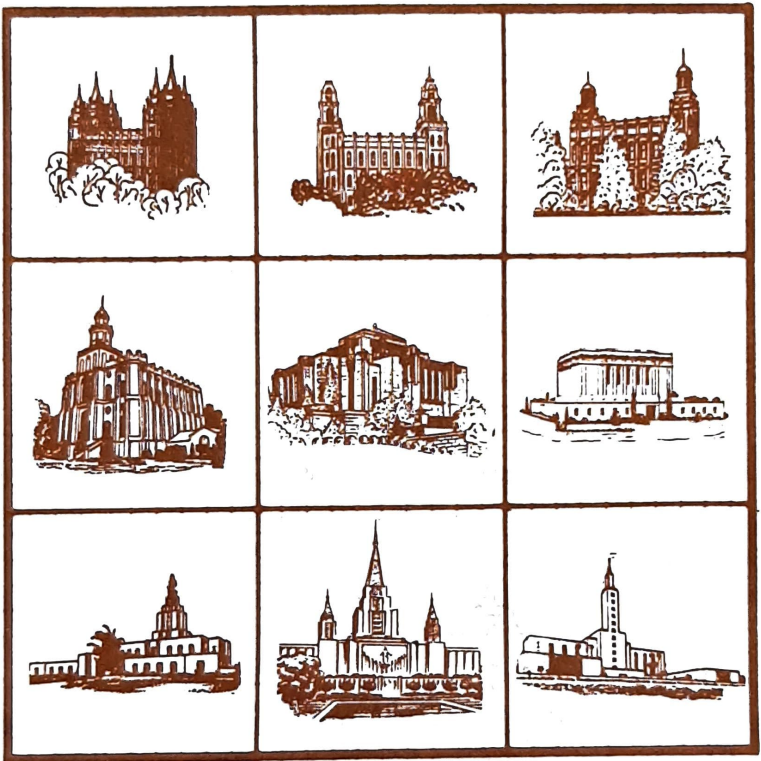


MORMON TEMPLES

WHAT ARE THEY FOR?



The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints, (Mormons), have built about two dozen temples in the United States and around the world. They have announced plans to double this number within the next two decades. Why do they build these multi-million dollar structures? What do the Mormons use them for?

We find an answer to this in the book, The House of The Lord, by the Mormon Apostle, James E. Talmage. He gives an outline of ceremonial work in a tem-

ple as (1) Baptism, specifically, baptism for the dead. (2) Ordination and associated Endowments in the Priesthood. (3) Marriage Ceremonies. (4) Other Sealing Ordinances.

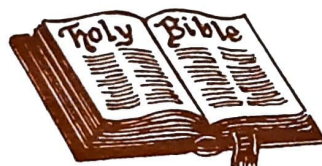
Baptism for the dead is the act of baptizing a living person by way of proxy for a dead person. The Mormons teach that baptism is required for salvation for all who live to the age of accountability, (8 years old). After a Mormon has been baptized for the dead person, hands are laid upon the proxy Mormon for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost upon the dead. After the dead receives the Holy Ghost he is then confirmed as a member of the Mormon Church.

The next item Mr. Talmage outlined was Ordination and Endowment. This Temple Endowment begins with instructions as to the significance of the past and the greatness of the present age. It is only administered to those holding the Priesthoods of the Mormon Church. These ordinances embody the promise to observe Mormon Church laws and moral laws. Along with this a blessing is pronounced upon the Mormon, (which blessing only comes true if the individual is faithful).

The third item mentioned by Mr. Talmage was Marriage Ceremonies, commonly referred to as a Temple Marriage by Mormons. The Latter-day Saints believe that a couple who gets married in a temple will be married in heaven for all time and eternity. This is called Celestial Marriage or being Sealed in Marriage. If a Mormon couple had been previously married outside the Mormon Church, then once they become worthy, they too can be sealed for time and eternity. One other purpose for this is that the children born to the Mormon couple after a Temple Wedding are heirs to the priest-

hood in which no ordinance of sealing needs to then be performed for them.

The last item Mr. Talmage mentioned was Other Sealing Ordinances. This is for children who are born outside a Celestial Marriage, so that they may be sealed to their parents. The purpose for all of this rests upon the fact that every male Mormon and his wife believes that if they are faithful to Mormonism on earth, they will be exalted to become a god and goddess after death. At that time they will receive a planet as an inheritance where they will be the gods over the inhabitants.



SO... WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

We would like to examine each of these temple purposes which Mr. Talmage outlined. Our first point of examination is baptism for the dead. Can it be stated that this is a Christian doctrine? If we look at the only verse in the Bible which mentions it, we may find an answer:

Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead raise not at all? Why are they then, baptized for the dead?
1 Corinthians 15:29

May I draw your attention to the fact that Paul's subject in 1 Corinthians 15 was the resurrection of the dead? There were those who did not believe in the resurrection, (1 Cor. 15:12). Paul points out that there were other people who baptized for the dead, which only showed that they believed the dead would raise. He used these other people as an example of the resurrection. This does not mean that he endorsed their practice. He never said that baptism for the dead was a Christian doctrine. In further observation please notice how Paul carefully

selected his pronouns in demonstrating that it was not Christian. He said that "they" did it. He did not say "we", which would have included himself and the Church. Paul shows that he and the Church were separate from "they" who were spoken of in verse 29. The Bible teaches that there is no second chance for salvation after death:

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement.

Hebrews 9:27

The Bible also warns us against doing other works for the dead, such as endless geneologies, (1 Timothy 1:4, Titus 3:9).

The next subject is that of Ordination and Endowments in the Mormon priesthood. In the Mormon Church it is taught that a worthy male can hold the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. The Aaronic priesthood was given in the Old Testament for the purpose of offering the sacrifices. The Bible teaches us that the Aaronic priesthood was done away with by the cross of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:12). There are no more sacrifices offered under the law, so there is no need for the Aaronic priesthood:

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

Hebrews 7:12

We also find in Hebrews 7:24 that Jesus alone holds the Melchizedek priesthood. It is unchangeable and untransferable. It cannot be passed on to another because Jesus still lives today. He lives forever after the order of Melchizedek:

...The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, By so much was Jesus make a surety of a better testament... But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Hebrews 7:21b - 24

The Mormon priesthood ordinances are unscriptural because they claim to hold two priesthoods which are not available. According to the New Testament the only priesthood which can be held by a Christian is the holy and royal priesthood:

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.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
1 Peter 2:5,9

The third issue is that of Celestial Marriage. Jesus stated very clearly that in the resurrection there will be no marriage:

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven.

Matthew 22:30

When the Church is received into heaven, all of those who are members of the Body of Christ, will be called the Bride of Christ. Their marital status on earth will not be a point of consideration. He said that in the resurrection, those who were married, will be as the angels. The question that the Sadducees asked Him was concerning the marriage relationship after earth, and Jesus said there was none. Consider this, at the time Jesus was speaking with the Sadducees there was still a temple standing in Jerusalem. If marriage was for time and eternity, as the Mormons say, then Jesus would have told the Sadducees to go have a temple wedding, but He didn't. He told them that marriage was ended after earth and all will become like the angels, neither marrying nor given in marriage. This would also say that the "Other Sealing Ordinances" are invalid.

There are two very important things the New Testament tells us about temples:

Nevertheless, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet.
Acts 7:48

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you...

1 Corinthians 6:19

The temple of Jerusalem was still standing when the above words were written. God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Millions of dollars can be spent on building temples but God won't be found in any of them. It is God's desire to dwell within the lives of those who truly believe upon His Son, Jesus. Your heart is the only temple He desires to dwell in. Jesus is Eternal God who took upon Himself human flesh for the purpose of dying on the cross for our sins (Philippians 2:6-8). Salvation is the free gift of God and cannot be brought about by any works of man's hands (Ephesians 2:8-9). Temple works will not get anyone closer to God because the Way to God has already been provided through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

You can have eternal life right now by forsaking the works of man and receiving God's grace through Christ Jesus. Pray and ask for forgiveness of you sins. Ask Jesus to indwell your life and to become your Lord and Savior:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:9

Read your Bible, pray often, and find a Bible-centered Church for fellowship. If you have any questions, please write:

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