

Thousands expected to visit during open house LDS temple opens in Newport Beach, CA

NEWPORT BEACH — Thousands of visitors from California and surrounding states are expected to tour the newly finished Newport Beach temple as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (known also as the LDS Church) opens this sacred building for a temporary public viewing. Once the open house comes to a close, only members in good standing who hold "temple recommends" will be allowed to enter.

Participation in what is called the temple "endowment" ceremony is an important facet of the LDS faith since it is in this ritual where Mormons (a common nickname for LDS Church members) learn secret "key words," "signs" and "tokens" that they hope will allow them to return to God's presence.

Brigham Young, Mormonism's second president, claimed, "Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 416).

Without their temples, the Mormon people are instructed that exaltation (or Godhood) in the next world is an impossibility. By completely obeying various laws and ordinances, faithful Latter-day Saints hope that they too can achieve the status of "Gods" and "Goddesses."

Since its founding in 1830, the Mormon Church has caused quite a controversy among Bible-believing Christians. While Mormons have every right to believe as they may, many leaders of the LDS Church have made some serious accusations against what millions of Christians hold dear. These statements must be challenged in light of history and the gospel message as portrayed throughout the Bible.

For instance, Latter-day Saints are told that their temples restore temple worship as discussed in the Bible. Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen claimed the LDS ceremony actually follows the pattern of biblical days when he wrote:

"In Biblical times sacred ordinances were administered in holy edifices for the spiritual salvation of ancient Israel. These buildings thus were not synagogues, nor any other ordinary places of worship... Following the pattern of Biblical days, the Lord again in our day has provided these ordinances for the salvation of all who will believe, and directs that temples be built in which to perform those sacred rites" (*Why Mormons Build Temples*, p. 2).

To test what Mr. Petersen has said, all one needs to do is examine the temple ceremony as it was practiced during biblical times. If the LDS temple ceremonies had their precedent in the Bible, it would be logical that today's rites would be similar to what took place in Israel until AD 70 when the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. But there are many differences, including:

- The Mormon Church has more than 100 other temples scattered across the globe; the Jews recognized only the temple in Jerusalem.

- The primary activity at the Jerusalem temple was the sacrifice of animals as atonement for the sins of the people. Worshipers in ancient Israel went to the temple with an attitude of unworthiness before an all-holy God. They approached His temple with humility as they looked to have their sins covered. In stark contrast, Mormons enter their temples with a positive sense of worthiness. A person cannot enter a Mormon temple (after it is dedicated) unless he or she is considered "worthy."

- The priests officiating in the Jerusalem temple had to be from the tribe of Levi. This was commanded in Numbers 3:6-10. The Mormon Church ignores such commands and allows its "temple-worthy" members who have no such background to officiate in its temples.



newport beach, california

As with other LDS temples throughout the world, the primary function of the Newport Beach temple will be the performance of rituals on behalf of the dead.

- Wedding ceremonies never occurred in the Jerusalem temple, yet this is a common practice in LDS temples.

- Baptism for the dead is the most common activity in Mormon temples. No such practice was ever performed in the Jerusalem temple.

- While many Mormon families have been "sealed" for time and eternity in LDS temples, the Jerusalem temple provided no such ordinance.

Mormons are told that the temple ceremony came by way of revelation to Mormonism's founder Joseph Smith, Jr. According to Mormon Apostle John Widtsoe, "Joseph Smith received the temple endowment and its ritual, as all else he promulgated, by revelation from God" (*Joseph Smith-Seeker After Truth*, p. 249).

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie echoed this same thought when he said the temple ordinances were "given in modern times to the Prophet Joseph Smith by revelation, many things connected with them being translated by the Prophet from the papyrus on which the Book of Abraham was recorded" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 779). (This is quite a statement since the *Book of Abraham*, which is regarded by Latter-day Saints as sacred scripture, has been shown to be an inaccurate translation of an ancient Egyptian funeral text.)

While few would disagree with the idea that many Mormons are a hard-working and sincere people, it is important to examine carefully the teachings of this religion. If Mormonism is true, then by all means it should be followed. But if it is wrong, it should be avoided at all cost.

Therefore, we offer this publication to you with love as our main motivation. As seekers of truth, it is important to consider all of the facts when determining whether or not a religion such as Mormonism is true.

If you do not want LDS missionaries showing up at your door, do not fill out any mailing lists

Obedience and celestial law

Throughout history, Christianity has taught that mankind is destined for only one of two places after death: heaven or hell. Mormonism, on the other hand, claims that what a person believes and does in this life will result in placement to one of three LDS heavenly kingdoms (testament, terrestrial or celestial) or outer darkness.

Naturally, a sincere Latter-day Saint is striving to gain what is known as a celestial exaltation. Achieving this prominent place in eternity will allow that person to receive numerous benefits not afforded those placed in any of the lower kingdoms.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:22 states, "For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory." Mormons who hope to achieve the celestial kingdom must abide by the celestial law.

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Hatred does not motivate

Mormon missionaries

You would probably be hard-pressed to find any person who would say that missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are motivated by anything but a sincere desire to share their faith with those who are not members of their church.

Why is it, then, that Bible-believing Christians who desire to share their faith with members of the LDS Church are oftentimes accused of being hateful and bigoted? Efforts on the part of Christians to discuss the teachings of Mormonism are often looked upon as acts of persecution. Is this fair?

No, it is not fair, according to Brigham Young, Mormonism's second president, who declared in 1859, "If I should hear a man advocate the erroneous principles he had imbibed through education, and oppose those principles, some might imagine that I was opposed to that man, when in fact I am only opposed to every

evil and erroneous principle he advances" (*Journal of Discourses* 7:191).

President Young seemed to understand the difference between personal animosity and intellectual dialogue. Why is it that many modern-day Mormons fail to see what Brigham Young saw?

When it comes to matters of eternal consequence, it is necessary to examine carefully both sides of the issue. As Young's first counselor George A. Smith said, "If a faith will not bear investigation; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak" (*Journal of Discourses* 14:216).

We invite our readers to check our sources for contextual accuracy and to notify the volunteer who gave it to you if you believe there is an inaccuracy in this publication.

The God of Mormonism

... is he the God of the Bible?

One of the major differences separating Mormonism from Christianity is the belief regarding the nature of God. Unlike Mormonism, Christianity is a monotheistic belief system. Christians have historically believed in the existence of only one God and the doctrine that there is no other before or after Him (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6-8).

Mormon founder Joseph Smith, Jr. strayed from this view when he emphatically proclaimed, "I wish to declare I have always and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods" (History of the Church 6:474).

Smith denounced the idea that his God eternally existed as God. Just prior to his death in 1844, Smith stated, "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, p. 345).

In the same sermon, he taught that "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!"

Several LDS leaders have insisted that no less than millions of Gods exist! For example, Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt taught, "If we should take a million of worlds like this and number their particles, we should find that there are more Gods than there

are particles of matter in those worlds" (Journal of Discourses 2:345).

Tenth LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, "The knowledge is now revealed that there are throughout the universe millions, in fact, innumerable galaxies—island universes—of stars... Evidently each of these great systems is governed by divine law; with divine presiding Gods, for it would be unreasonable to assume that each was not so governed" (Answers to Gospel Questions 2:143-144).

It is taught that faithful Mormon males have the potential to reach Godhood using the same path God the Father himself followed. Fifth President Lorenzo Snow claimed that it was a direct revelation that led him to coin the phrase, "As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be" (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, p. 2). If this were true, the potential for millions of Gods would not be an exaggeration.

The Bible never hides the fact that the God of the Bible is the "God of gods." Five times this expression is used to demonstrate how the God of the Bible is the sovereign and powerful God of creation. (See Deut. 10:17; Joshua 22:22; Ps. 136:2; Daniel 2:47, 11:36.)

The Mormon may try to argue that since other gods are mentioned, this therefore supports the LDS view of the existence of a mul-

tiplicity of Gods. Nothing could be further from the truth.

For instance, many Mormons cite the last portion of 1 Corinthians 8:5 to support their position. It reads, "...as there be gods many, and lords many." In doing so they fail to consider the context of the passage, for the previous sentence says, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth..."

Students of world religions quickly recognize the fact that any number of objects—human, stone, or otherwise—have been elevated to deity by different cultures in various times. This was the situation faced by the Apostle Paul when he penned his words to the Corinthians in the middle of the first century. People can call anything they want a god, but that doesn't make it a true god.

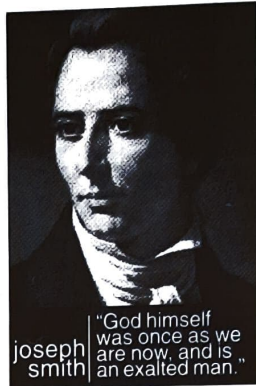
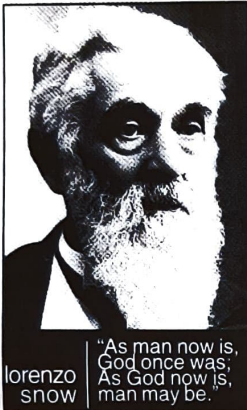
On August 13, 1843, LDS Apostle Orson Hyde referred to the 1 Corinthians 8 passage, but in so doing he added some interesting information when he declared, "There are Lords many, and Gods many, for they are called Gods to whom the word of God comes, and the word of God comes to all these kings and priests. But to our branch of the kingdom there is but one God, to whom we all owe the most perfect submission and loyalty; yet our God is just as subject to still higher intelligences, as we should be to him" (Orson Hyde, "A Diagram of the Kingdom of God," Millennial

Star 9 [15 January 1847]: 23, 24, as quoted in The Words of Joseph Smith, p. 299).

Hyde's comment raises a very important question: How can the God of Mormonism be the biblical "God of gods" if he is "subject to still higher intelligences"? If that is true, the power and sovereignty of the Mormon God is strictly limited. He is neither the omnipotent God of the Bible nor is he the God of Christianity.

Joseph Smith's description of God also causes us to question his claim to be God's prophet. Never in Christian history did God's people worship a being that fits Smith's description. Since Smith introduces a God who was known neither by Jews nor by Christians, it would be a serious error to accept him as a chosen vessel of God in light of his failure to pass the test of Deuteronomy 13:1-3, which states: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Based on this information, Mormonism's God is clearly different from the biblical God.



The Christ of the Latter-day Saints

Although you may have observed pictures of Jesus Christ in the temple and had missionaries explain Jesus's importance because their church is the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Mormonism's perspective of Jesus is different from the historic Christian view.

This was admitted by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie who stated, "And virtually all the millions of apostate Christendom have abused themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ" (Mormon Doctrine, 1966 ed., p. 269).

When asked if he believed in the traditional Christ, President Gordon B. Hinckley flatly stated, "No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak" (Church News, 20 June 1998, p. 7).

He also said, "We acknowledge without hesitation that there are differences between us [and other faiths]. Were this not so there would have been no need for a restoration of the gospel" (Ensign, May 1998, p. 4).

If LDS leaders claim that Christianity's Jesus is different from theirs, then just who is Jesus according to Mormonism?

First, the LDS Jesus is the preincarnate "Jehovah" who was the literal son of Elohim, which is the Mormon name for God the Father. Mormons are taught that God the Father was "once a man like us" who became the God he is today by learning "all the principles of exaltation" (Gospel Principles, 1997 ed., p. 305).

Christians believe that God is a God of spirit (John 4:24). Mormons, on the other hand, are taught that God currently inhabits a resurrected body of "flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22) and that people on this earth are "literally the sons and daughters of Deity" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 516).

Since Mormonism's Lucifer (Satan) was also a son of Elohim, Jesus and Lucifer are considered to

be "two brothers...sons of Elohim" (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 34).

Christians have never believed that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers. Instead, the Bible says that Jesus is the creator of all things, including Lucifer himself (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17).

Second, the earthly body of the Mormon Jesus was conceived when Elohim physically impregnated Mary. In contrast, the Bible teaches that the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary in a nonphysical supernatural way in what is called the Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). Consider the following quotations:

"Thus, God the Father became the literal father of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father" (official LDS handbook Gospel Principles, 1997 ed., p. 64).

"...how are children begotten? I answer just as Jesus Christ was begotten of his father... We must come down to the simple fact that God Almighty was the Father of His Son Jesus Christ. Mary, the virgin girl, who had never known mortal man, was his mother. God by her begot His son Jesus Christ..." (Family Home Evening Manual, 1972, pp. 125-126).

"The official doctrine of the Church is that Jesus is the literal offspring of God. He's got 46 chromosomes; 23 came from Mary, 23 came from God the Eternal Father" (BYU professor Stephen E. Robinson, The Mormon Puzzle).

Finally, unlike the biblical Jesus who is eternally God and therefore perfect, the Mormon Jesus had to "work out his own salvation" (McConkie, The Mortal Messiah 1:417). In the words of Apostle Russell M. Nelson, "Jesus attained perfection following his resurrection..." (Ensign, November 1995, p. 87). The idea that Jesus "attained" perfection troubles Christians who believe that Jesus is truly God in the flesh (Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16).

Apostle disagreed with common LDS interpretation

Did Jesus really say that men could become Gods?

According to many Mormons, Jesus taught the LDS doctrine that men can become Gods. To support this idea, John 10:34 is often referenced. In this passage, Christ told his religious adversaries, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods?"

There are several problems with the LDS conclusion. First of all, Jesus speaks in the present tense. He did not say that the people to whom he was addressing would become Gods; rather, he told his opponents that they "are gods." No knowledgeable Mormon would claim that any individual could reach Godhood while still in a state of mortality.

Second, was Jesus actually declaring that these wicked rulers were God material? This would seem unlikely, even from a Mormon standard. Jesus's religious accusers fell far short of the requirements for Godhood as set forth in modern Mormonism.

Third, Jesus was quoting from Psalm 82, a psalm of rebuke written by Asaph. A closer look at this chapter shows that the gods in this passage will actually die like men (vs. 7). Since Godhood is defined in LDS teaching as eternal life, it seems unlikely that this is referring to actual deities.

Fourth, it is clear that Jesus's use of the word gods in John 10:34 is meant to be understood as human judges. This is certainly plausible since the word translated gods in Psalm 82:6 (Elohim) is also translated judges in Exodus 21:6,22; 22:8.

Least a Mormon disbelieve this interpretation of these passages, page 501 of LDS Apostle James Talmage's book Jesus the Christ says: "Divinely Appointed Judges Called 'gods.'—In Psalm 82:6, judges invested by divine appointment are called 'gods.' To this scripture the Savior referred in His reply to the Jews in Solomon's Porch."

Because this is a reference to human judges—as clearly stated by a general authority of the LDS Church—John 10:34 is not a good text to show how men can become Gods. The Bible is very clear that, while Christians will have glorified bodies some day, they will never become gods since there is only one true God in existence.

John 10:34 is not a good text to show how men can become Gods

is Christianity Mormonism

Christianity

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is christianity mormonism?

In recent years the leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been trying very hard to distance their church from its dubious past and convince the world that this is, in fact, a Christian organization. What many people do not understand is that Mormons do not consider the LDS Church to be just one among many Christian denominations. Indeed, the Mormon Church alone is said to represent true Christianity.

According to page 513 of the book *Mormon Doctrine*, "...Mormonism is Christianity; Christianity is Mormonism... Mormons are true Christians."

In light of such a claim, many Mormons are highly offended when anyone questions the Christianity of LDS members. As far as they are concerned, the Mormon Church represents the true Christian faith as Jesus and His apostles originally handed it down. The inconsistency lies in the fact that LDS Church leaders have questioned the Christianity of all non-Mormons since the beginning of the Mormon Church in 1830.

Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of the LDS Church, attacked the Christian faith when he claimed that both God the Father and Jesus Christ visited him near his home in Palmyra, New York. When he was asked these personages which church he should join, he claimed that he was told to join none of them, "for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight" (*Joseph Smith History* 1:19).

When asked, "Will all be damned but Mormons?" he replied, "Yes, and a great portion of them unless they repent and work righteousness" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 119).

President Brigham Young, Mormonism's second president, stated, "When the light came to me I saw that all the so-called Christian world was grovelling in darkness" (*Journal of Discourses* 5:73).

He also said, "The Christian world, so-called, are heathens as to the knowledge of the salvation of God" (*Journal of Discourses* 8:171).

John Taylor, Mormonism's third president, had similar feelings. He proclaimed, "What does the Christian world know about God? Nothing...Why so far as the things of God are concerned, they are the veriest of fools; they know neither God nor the things of God" (*Journal of Discourses* 13:225).

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt wrote, "...all other churches are entirely destitute of all authority from God; and any person who receives Baptism or the Lord's supper from their hands highly offends God, for he looks upon them as the most corrupt of all people. Both Catholics and

Protestants are nothing less than the 'whore of Babylon' whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornication and wickedness" (*The Seer*, p. 255).

B.H. Roberts served as both LDS Church historian and general authority. He wrote, "Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (*History of the Church*, introduction, p. xl).

While some Mormons may wish to distance themselves from the previous quotes, they cannot do so entirely since this concept is still taught in their sacred scriptures.

First Neph 14:10 in the *Book of Mormon* states: "Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth."

Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie defined the church of the devil when he wrote, "What is the church of the

devil in our day, and where is the seat of her power? ...It is all of the systems, both Christian and non-Christian, that have perverted the pure and perfect gospel; ...It is communism; it is Islam; it is Buddhism; it is modern Christianity in all its parts. It is Germany under Hitler, Russia under

Stalin, and Italy under Mussolini" (*The Millennial Messiah*, pp. 54-55).

The LDS scripture *Doctrine and Covenants* (1:30) is supposedly quoting Jesus as saying how the LDS Church is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased...."

The concept that Christianity had fallen into apostasy was once demonstrated in the LDS temple ceremony when a character who portrayed a Christian minister was hired by Lucifer to preach the "orthodox religion." This orthodox religion included the belief in a God of Spirit who was surrounded by numerous beings who had been saved by grace.

When such information became public knowledge, Christians were outraged. The LDS Church removed these offensive portions from their ceremony in 1990. However, the idea of a God of spirit and salvation by grace alone is still considered anathema by the LDS Church. For instance, LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie wrote, "The greatest heresy found in Christendom is that God is a spirit" (*The Millennial Messiah*, p.77).

Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the LDS Church, wrote, "One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation..." (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.70).

If someone made a claim to represent Mormonism but instead denied or distorted the doctrines that make Mormonism what it is (i.e. denial of Joseph Smith, *Book of Mormon*, etc.), this person would be quickly challenged and denounced by Latter-day Saints everywhere. Therefore, when LDS leaders deny or distort doctrines held dear by Christians all over the world, does it not make sense that their claim to Christianity should be challenged by faithful Christians who hold dearly to biblical truth?



Brigham Young "The Christian world...are heathens as to the knowledge of the salvation of God."

Excerpts from a sermon by Charles Spurgeon

One Door to Salvation

You must understand that there is only one door to salvation, and that is Christ; there is one way, and that is Christ; one truth, and that is Christ; one life, and that is Christ. Salvation lies in Jesus only; it does not lie in you, in your doings, or your feelings, or your knowings, or your resolutions....

Though the Lord has placed it on record in His Word, in the plainest language, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that

showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16) yet most men in their hearts imagine that everlasting life is tied to duties and earned by service.

You must abandon such vainglorious notions; you must come before God as a humble petitioner, pleading the promises of mercy, abhorring all idea of merit....

Oh, too many of you hold your heads too high; to enter the lowly gate of light you must stoop. On the bended knee is the penitent's true place. "God be merciful to me, a sinner," is the penitent's true place....

Confess that you are an undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving sinner and begin to pray as you have never prayed before. Cry out of the depth of self-abasement if you want to be heard. Come as a beggar, not as a creditor....

Your salvation does not depend upon what you do, but upon what Christ did when he offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin....

When you are brought empty-handed, made willing to accept a free and full salvation from the hand of the Crucified, then, and then only, will you be saved.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in England.

Some questions to ask an LDS missionary

It is common for the LDS tour guides to ask their visitors to refrain from asking questions until the end of the silent tour. Most open house events feature a room at the end of the tour where refreshments are served to the visitors. Here missionaries and other folks with name badges may come up to you and ask how you enjoyed the tour and whether or not you have any questions.

Here are a few examples of honest questions you might want to ask in order to find out more about the purpose of the more than 100 LDS temples located around the world:

1. If the main reason for the Old Testament temple was sacrificing animals for the atonement of sin, and if your temple is supposed to be a restoration of the temple from biblical times, why won't animal sacrifice be practiced here?
2. If the ancient Israelites made sacred covenants in their temple similar to those made in LDS temples, where in the Old Testament can we find evidence for this claim?
3. Why does your church say only the "worthy" may attend temple ceremonies when the very purpose of the biblical temple was for people to come and offer sacrifices to atone for their unworthiness?
4. How come all male members of your church are allowed to be priests when the Bible very clearly said only those from the tribe of Levi could participate?
5. Besides one verse (1 Cor. 15:29) that is taken out of context—see "LDS Temples and the Dead" on page 4—why do both the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* say that no more work can be accomplished after death? (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 9:27; Alma 34:32-35; 2 Nephi 9:38; Mosaiah 3:25, 16:5, 11; 26:25-27)
6. Why does drinking coffee or not paying a full tithe to the LDS Church keep a person from getting a temple recommend (which is needed for temple entrance once the open house is complete)?
7. What is a "washing and anointing room"? And why was the general public not shown this room during the open house tour?
8. What evidence do you have from either the New Testament or *Book of Mormon* that work for the dead, weddings and sealings of families were intended for temple work today (rather than animal sacrifices)?

what the Book of Mormon DOESN'T tell you

Joseph Smith declared that the *Book of Mormon* was the "fulness of the gospel" and the "most correct book on earth"; he said a person "would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.194).

Since several LDS prophets have quoted this statement, many assume a detailed understanding of LDS doctrine can be obtained by reading the *Book of Mormon*. However, a person could read the entire *Book of Mormon* cover to cover and never read about the many doctrines that clearly separate Mormonism from Christianity.

Ironically, the characters and heroes mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* do not resemble early Latter-day Saints at all. For instance, the *Book of Mormon* does show the Nephites believing in a God who was once a man. It never mentions three degrees of glory nor does it teach that marriage can be for "time and eternity."

The doctrines of eternal progression, pre-existence, the idea that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers, and baptism for the dead are all conspicuously absent in a book that, again, has been touted as the "fulness of the gospel."

Doctrinal Comparison Chart

LDS Definitions	Christian Definitions
<p>GOD THE FATHER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elohim was once a man 2. He is one of many Gods 3. Comprised of a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's (D&C 130:22) 4. He is married <p>JESUS CHRIST:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He is God's first spirit child and not always God 2. He is the spirit brother of Lucifer (a.k.a. Satan, Devil) 3. Elohim, a resurrected man of flesh and bone, is his literal father; he was conceived in the same manner as all humans are <p>MAN:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men can become Gods with all the powers of Godhood 2. A person's spirit is procreated by a Heavenly Father and Mother (preexistence). Later, he or she receives a body <p>SALVATION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Almost everyone, even those who don't accept Christ, will eventually receive some degree of glory in one of three levels of heaven (D&C 76:31-44) 2. Eternal life is earned through works, including temple work 	<p>GOD THE FATHER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always God (Ps. 90:2) 2. Only God in existence (Is. 43:10, 44:6; Heb. 6:13) 3. Is a spirit, not flesh and bones (1 Kings 8:27; Jn 4:24) 4. Not married <p>JESUS CHRIST:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He has always been God with no beginning/end 2. He is Lucifer's creator (Col. 1:15-17) 3. He appeared in a body via miraculous conception called the Virgin Birth, not by a physical act (Matt. 1:18-23) <p>MAN:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only God is God (Is. 43:10; 44:6-8; 48:11-12) 2. A person's spirit is created within him/her by God, who independently created everything by Himself <p>SALVATION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Those who reject the true Christ will be damned (John 8:24; 14:6) 2. Eternal life with God is a gift, not earned. (Eph. 2:8-10; Gal. 2:16-21; Rom. 11:5-6; Tit. 3:4-6)

LDS temples and the dead

Human communication with the dead, or necromancy, is never encouraged in the Bible and is always condemned by God (1 Samuel 15:23, 28:6ff).

Despite these grave warnings, many temple Mormons look forward with great anticipation to possibly being visited by spirits from the dead. In fact, there are a number of recorded sightings of dead spirits who have visited Mormons in LDS temples.

Prior to the dedication of the San Diego temple in 1993, local Mormon families were given a packet titled *Family Temple Preparation Material*. Included in this material were about seven pages devoted to "true stories" of temple patrons who had been visited by the dead.

Fourth Mormon Prophet Wilford Woodruff told followers in 1887, "The dead will be after you, they will seek after you as they have after us in St. George [a temple in southern Utah]." (*Journal of Discourses* 19:229.)

In his book *Temple Manifestations*, Mormon writer Joseph Heinerman lists several accounts of dead spir-

its visiting patrons in LDS temples.

Because such visitations are never condoned by the Bible but rather condemned, encounters like these should be shunned rather than encouraged.

In fact, a great majority of the work done in LDS temples is on be-

cause we have neglected our dead; and just so sure their blood will be required at our hands" (*Doctrines of Salvation* 2:145).

A primary proof-text for this teaching is 1 Corinthians 15:29. Here the apostle Paul wrote, "Else what shall they do which are baptized

"The dead will be after you"

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half of the dead. Besides endowments for the dead, baptisms for the dead are also performed.

A number of prominent people have been baptized vicariously by faithful Latter-day Saints. These include such individuals as Christopher Columbus, Lord Horatio Nelson, William Shakespeare, Napoleon Bonaparte and even Adolph Hitler.

Mormons are told that it is through this rite their ancestors will have the opportunity to respond to the restored Mormon message in the spirit world.

Tenth LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "If we willfully neglect the salvation of our dead, then also we shall stand rejected of the Lord, be-

cause we have neglected our dead; and just so sure their blood will be required at our hands" (*Doctrines of Salvation* 2:145).

Admittedly, biblical scholars have differed on an exact interpretation of this vague passage. But it is interesting to note that Paul uses the third person (they), thus summarily excluding himself from such a practice.

If Paul actually had performed the ritual himself, he would have said we, not they, in this verse, especially since LDS scripture claims that this doctrine is the "most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel" (D&C 128:17).

Work for the dead is not biblical and is therefore not practiced in biblical Christianity.

Obedience and celestial law

continued from page one

What exactly is celestial law? LDS Apostle Orson Whitney said, "It does not mean any one thing; it means all things. It is the fullness of obedience: it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (*Conference Report*, October 1910, p. 53).

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, "To enter the celestial and obtain exaltation it is necessary that the whole law be kept... Do you desire to enter the celestial kingdom and receive eternal life? Then be willing to keep all of the commandments." (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 206).

While such demands may appear to demonstrate a religious zeal, we have yet to meet any Mormon who is meeting the above requirements. In fact, we know of no Mormon who is fully obeying all the commands of God, which is the keeping of the whole law.

If a Mormon is not meeting the celestial requirements, he or she will, as defined by LDS leadership, be condemned to a lower kingdom and forfeit the opportunity for Godhood.

"I Can Do It Later"

Many Mormons feel that they will have an opportunity after death to get things in order. This idea, while comforting, does not square with LDS theology.

Mormonism teaches that this lifetime is a probation period. The purpose of this lifetime is for the Mormon to prove him or herself worthy of exaltation. To fail in this capacity will result in never reaching that celestial goal.

In fact, the *Book of Mormon* says that there is no other time for salvation than the present. Alma 34:32 says, "For behold, this life is the time for man to prepare to meet God: yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors."

"What About Repentance?"

When confronted with this dilemma, many Latter-day Saints resort to the doctrine of repentance. While repenting of one's sins sounds like the logical remedy, it is self-defeating when one looks at the whole picture painted in Mormonism.

But the fact that Latter-day Saints have to repent really proves they are not living up to the strict guidelines laid down by church leadership. In other words, a person must not be obeying celestial law or there would be no need of repentance.

In his pamphlet titled *Repentance Brings Forgiveness*, twelfth LDS President Kimball taught, "The forsaking of sin must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit making the same mistake again." Can any Mormon say with confidence that he or she has accomplished this?

The *Book of Mormon* offers no excuses to the Mormon who fails in this endeavor. First Nephi 3:7 states, "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

"But I'm Trying!"

While many Latter-day Saints are willing to do what is right, Mormon leaders have stressed that the accomplishment of obeying celestial law, not merely a willingness to obey, is what is needed.

President Kimball asserted, "Trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance complete when one merely tries to abandon sin." He went on to say, "To 'try' is weak. To 'do the best I can' is not strong. We must always do better than we can" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 164-165).

When people are baptized as members in the LDS Church, they promise to keep all of God's laws and commandments. Naturally they fail. No human can live up to such expectations, but day in and day out the LDS Church leaders and representatives require their people to go through what is no doubt a meaningless vow. Each week members make the promise, yet each week they fail to keep the promise.

Conclusion

Romans 3:19 says that those who try to appease God by following the law are guilty before God. They cannot do it. Could it be that what these men have taught is not true? Could it be that the Bible offers a better way? It seems so.

The Bible declares that we are all sinners and incapable of saving ourselves. Jesus did not die just to make the resurrection of the believer possible, rather, He came to take away all (not merely some) of the believer's sins (Col. 2:13).

It is our sin that separates us from God. Once that barrier has been removed, those people are declared righteous before God, thus making them eligible for all the blessings He has in store for those whom He has called.

It is Christ's total obedience, not our partial obedience, that saves true Christians from condemnation (Romans 5:19). When we come to Christ by faith, His righteousness is "imputed" (or "added") to our account (Romans 4:1-8).

Only His righteousness will satisfy the demands of an all-Holy God. Nothing less will do. It is only when we rely on this biblical fact that we can have the assurance of God's forgiveness.

Those who insist that this salvation is dependent on good works and individual righteousness will continue to be frustrated and bear the heavy burden of guilt.

Don't be misled! It is unfortunate that many Latter-day Saints live under this tremendous load of guilt. Only those who place their total trust in Christ's righteousness will experience the joy and assurance that true salvation affords.

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- Utah Gospel Mission**, PO Box 1901, Orange, CA 92856, www.utahgospelmision.org
- Center for Apologetics Research**, Box 1196, SJC, CA 92693, (949) 496-2000, www.thecenters.org
- Evidence Ministries**, PO Box 690371, San Antonio, TX 78269, (210) 340-TRUE, www.evidenceministries.org
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- Institute for Religious Research**, 1340 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, www.irr.org
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