

More than 80,000 Expected to Visit During Open House

LDS Temple Opens in San Antonio, Texas

SAN ANTONIO — Thousands of visitors from Texas and surrounding states are expected to tour the newly finished San Antonio 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 may 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 learn secret "key words," "signs," and "tokens" that they hope will help them 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*, pg.416).

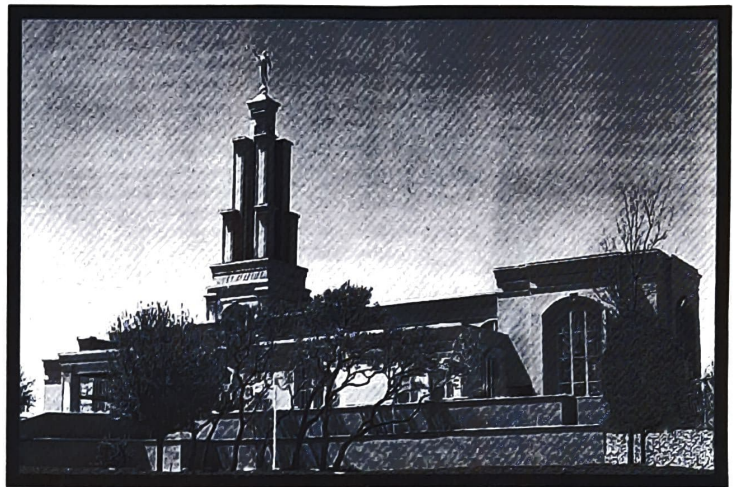
Without the temple, Mormons are told that exaltation (or

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 LDS 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 Bible.

Latter-day Saints are told that their temple is a restoration of the temple worship discussed in the Bible. Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen claimed the LDS ceremony actually follows the pattern of biblical days. 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 ordi-



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

nances 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*, pg. 2).

To verify what Mr. Petersen has said, all one has 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.

These differences include:

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

- The primary activity at the Jerusalem temple was the sacrificing of animals on behalf of the sins of the people. Worshipers in ancient Israel went to the temple with an attitude of unworthiness before an all-holy God. With humility they approached His temple looking to have their sins covered. In stark contrast, Mormons enter their temple with a positive sense of worthiness. One cannot even 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 a direct command from Numbers 3:6-10. The Mormon Church ignores such commands and allows "temple-worthy" LDS Church members to officiate in its temples who have no such background.

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

- Baptisms for the dead by far make up most of the 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 Mormon temples, the Jerusalem temple provided no such ordinance.

Mormons are told that the temple ceremony came by way of revelations 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*, pg.779).

This is quite a statement since the Book of Abraham (regarded by Latter-day Saints as sacred scripture) has been proven to be an inaccurate translation of an ancient Egyptian funerary text.

While few would argue that many Mormons are a hard-working and sincere people, it is important that you examine the teachings of Mormonism carefully. It is for this purpose that this publication is offered.

Exaltation and Celestial Law

Historically, Christianity has always taught that mankind is destined to only one of two destinations after he/she dies: heaven or hell. Mormonism, on the other hand, claims that what a person believes and does in this life will result in being placed in either the telestial, terrestrial, or celestial kingdoms. The truly wicked will be condemned to what is termed "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 who were less fortunate to be placed in any of the lower kingdoms.

Each kingdom has a set of laws. Those who live a telestial law while in mortality will be assigned to a telestial glory; those who live a terrestrial law will be assigned a terrestrial glory. Likewise, a person who abides by what is known as celestial law will be assigned a place in the celestial kingdom. 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." If a Mormon hopes to reach the celestial kingdom, he must abide by the celestial law.

What exactly is celestial law? 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 Brigham Young said, "If we obey this law, preserve it inviolate, live according to it, we shall be prepared to enjoy the blessings of a celestial kingdom" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pg.404).

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*, pg. 206).

While such demands may appear to demonstrate a religious zeal, they are certainly impractical given the fact that we have yet to meet any Mormon who is meeting the above requirements. We know of no Mormon who is fully obeying all of the commands of God, nor have we met any Mormon who is keeping the whole law.

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

Continued on Page 6

Hatred does not motivate LDS 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, when Bible-believing Christians desire to share their faith with a member of the LDS Church, they are more often than not accused of being hateful and bigoted? Any effort on their part to discuss the teachings of Mormonism is often looked upon as an act of persecution. Is this right?

Apparently not, according to Mormonism's second President Brigham Young 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 most modern-day Mormons fail to see what Brigham Young saw?

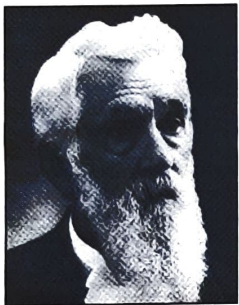
When it comes to matters of eternal consequence, it is necessary to examine carefully both sides of the issue. As Young's first counselor George A. Smith said, "If a faith will not bear investigation; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined, their foundation must be very weak"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

We invite our readers to check our sources for context accuracy and to notify us of any mistaken references.

The God of Mormonism – Is he the God of gods?

One of the major differences separating Mormonism from Christianity is the belief of the nature of God. Unlike Mormonism, Christianity is a monotheistic belief system. Christians believe that there exists one God and one only.

Mormon founder Joseph Smith 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, he 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! 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 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).

"As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be"

Lorenzo Snow

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.

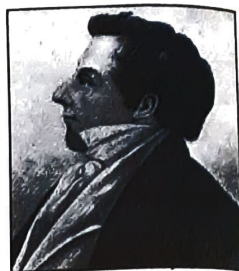
The Bible never hides the fact that the God of the Bible is the "God of gods." Five times this expression is used to demonstrate how the God of the Bible is the sovereign and powerful God of creation (see Deut. 10:17; Joshua 22:22; Ps. 136:2; Daniel 2:47, 11:36).

The Mormon may try to argue that since other gods are mentioned, this therefore supports the LDS view of the existence of a multiplicity of Gods. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mormons often 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 see the importance of the words that precede this

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man."

Joseph Smith



text. It reads, "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 true.

On August 13, 1843, LDS Apostle Orson Hyde referred to the First Corinthians 8 passage, but in doing so he added some interesting information.

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.

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 he introduces a God who was neither known by Jews or 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.

It says: "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."

Visitation from the Dead

Seen by LDS as positive experience

Human communication with the dead, or necromancy, is never encouraged in the Bible and is always condemned (1 Samuel 15:23, 28:6ff). Such a practice was punishable by death (1 Samuel 28:9). Despite these grave warnings, many temple Mormons look forward with great anticipation to possibly being visited by spirits of 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

"The dead will be after you"

Wilford Woodruff

packet entitled *Family Temple Preparation Material*. Included in this written material were about seven pages devoted to "true stories" of temple patrons who were 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 entitled *Temple Manifestations*, Mormon writer Joseph Heinerman lists several accounts of dead spirits visiting patrons in LDS temples.

Such encounters are never condoned by the Bible and as such, should be shunned rather than encouraged.

Did Jesus say men could become Gods in John 10:34?

Many Mormons have insisted that Jesus taught the LDS doctrine that men can become Gods. In support of this, Latter-day Saints refer to John 10:34 where the Lord tells His religious adversaries, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods?"

Of course, there are several problems with the LDS conclusion. First of all, Jesus speaks in present tense. He did not say that the people 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? It would seem

unlikely, even from a Mormon standard. Jesus' religious accusers fell far short of the requirements for Godhood as set down in modern Mormonism.

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

Fourth, it is clear that Jesus' 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

One prominent LDS apostle disagreed with modern Mormon interpretations

21:6,22; 22:8. Lest 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."

1st Corinthians 15:29

A great majority of the work done in LDS temples is on behalf of the dead. Besides endowments for the dead, baptisms for the dead are also performed.

Several 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 Adolf Hitler.

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

Tenth LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "If we wilfully neglect the salvation of our dead, then also we shall stand rejected of the Lord, because 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 for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

Admittedly, biblical scholars have offered many suggestions for this vague passage. Still, it is interesting to note that Paul uses the third person (they), thus summarily excluding himself from such a practice.

It would seem reasonable that if Paul actually performed the ritual himself, he would have said we, not they, in this verse, especially since LDS scripture claims that baptism for the dead is the "most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel" (Doctrine and Covenants 128:17).

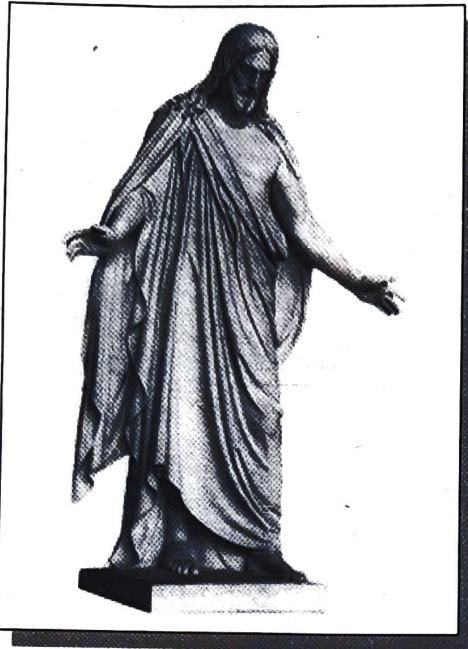
The "Living Christ" of Mormonism

Mormons insist that theirs is a Christian church by the very fact that the name of Jesus Christ appears in their church's official title. On January 1, 2000 the LDS Church issued a declaration that testified to a belief in "The living Christ." The one-page document spoke of a Jesus who was "The Firstborn of the Father" and the "Only Begotten Son in the flesh." However, despite the fact that many of these words sound orthodox, LDS leaders have insisted that the Jesus of the Mormon faith is, in fact, a different Jesus worshipped by millions of Christians throughout the world.

When asked if he believed in the traditional Christ, President Gordon B. Hinckley flatly said, "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] ~~and~~ ^{we} ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~so~~ ^{so} ~~there~~ ^{there} ~~would~~ ^{would} ~~have~~ ^{have} ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~no~~ ^{no} ~~need~~ ^{need} ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~a~~ ^a ~~restoration~~ ^{restoration} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~gospel~~ ^{gospel}" (*Ensign*, May 1998, p.4). In closing comments Mr. Hinckley made at General Conference in April of 2002, he again reiterated, "As a church we have critics, many of them. They say we do not believe in the traditional Christ of Christianity. There is some substance to what they say."

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie once stated, "And virtually all the millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 269). If LDS leaders claim that the Christian version of Jesus is different from theirs, then just who is Jesus according to Mormonism?

First, the LDS Jesus is the pre-incarnate "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 have always believed that God is a God of spirit (John 4:24); Mormons, on the other hand, are told that God currently inhabits a body of "flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22) and that all people on this earth are "literally the sons



"No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak"

President Gordon B. Hinckley

and daughters of Deity" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516). Since Mormonism's Lucifer (Satan) was also a son of Elohim, Mormons are led to

believe that Jesus and Lucifer are "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 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17).

Second, the earthly body of the Mormon Jesus was conceived when Elohim physically impregnated Mary. This is much different than what the Bible teaches. It says that the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary in a nonphysical way in what is called the Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). Truly Mormonism's "virgin birth" is much different. Consider the following:

"The [LDS Church] proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the most literal sense. The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh was sired by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father" (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 7).

"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).

Sixth Mormon President Joseph F. Smith said, "...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 own 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*, p.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, as quoted in the video *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 puzzles Christians who believe that Jesus is truly God in the flesh (Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16).

It is for the above reasons that many within the Christian community have great concerns regarding the "Christianity" of the Mormon Church.

One Door to Salvation

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"Salvation lies in Jesus only; it does not lie in you, in your doings, or your feelings, or your knowings, or your resolutions."

promises of mercy, abhorring all idea of merit, confessing that if the Lord condemns you He has a right to do it, and if He saves you, it will be an act of pure gratuitous mercy, a deed of sovereign grace.

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. If God should condemn you, you could never complain of injustice, for you could not accuse the Lord, for you have no right to be heard. He could righteously withhold an answer of peace if He so willed. 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. Come to crave, not to demand.

Use only this argument, "Lord, hear me, for you are gracious, and Jesus died; I cry to you as a condemned criminal who seeks pardon. Deliver me from going down into the pit, that I may praise your name."

This harboring of a proud spirit, I fear, has been a great source of mischief with many, and if it has been so with you, amend it and go now with humble and contrite hearts, in lowliness and brokenness of spirit, to your Father whom you have offended, for he will surely accept you as his children.

Your salvation does not depend upon what you do, but upon what Christ did when he offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin. All your salvation takes root in the death throes of Calvary; the great Substitute bore your sin and suffered its penalty. Your sin shall never destroy you if upon that bloody tree the Lord's chosen High Priest made a full expiation for your sins; they shall not be laid against you any more forever.

What you have to do is simply accept what Jesus has finished. I know your idea is that you are to bring something to him; but that vainglorious idea has ruined many, and will ruin many more. 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 will be saved.

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

Achieving a Celestial Marriage

The following article is four pages (129-132) out of the official Mormon Church manual *Achieving a Celestial Marriage Student Manual*. These four pages give an excellent explanation of the world view of Mormonism and the central theme of the importance of Mormon temples within Mormon theology. We quote this information to show the clearly non-Christian nature of Mormonism. This article is copied without commentary and is allowable under the "Fair Use" clause of the copyright code. We invite the reader to examine the original document for context and accuracy.

Celestial Marriage: Key to Exaltation

(1-1) INTRODUCTION

The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that man is an eternal being, made in the image and likeness of God. It also holds that man is a literal child of God and has the potential, if faithful to divine laws and ordinances, of becoming like his heavenly parent. These truths are generally well understood by Latter-day Saints.

Less well understood, however, is the fact that God is an exalted man who once lived on an earth and underwent experiences of mortality. The Prophet Joseph Smith refers to this as "the great secret." (*Times and Seasons* 5:613 [Aug. 1844]. See also Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345.) The progression of our Father in heaven to godhood, or exaltation, was strictly in accordance with eternal principles, "for he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory." (D&C 88:22.)

By definition, exaltation includes the ability to procreate the family unit throughout eternity. This our Father in heaven has power to do. His marriage partner is our mother in heaven. We are their spirit children, born to them in the bonds of celestial marriage.

The Lord would have all his children attain exaltation, but men must have their agency. Only those who subscribe by ordinance and by faithful adherence to covenant are worthy of "a continuation of the seeds forever and ever." (D&C 132:19.)

GOD WAS ONCE A MORTAL MAN

(1-2) He Lived on an Earth like Our Own

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communeth with another." (Smith, *Teachings*, p. 345.)

(1-3) He Experienced Conditions Similar to Our Own and Advanced Step by Step

"Remember that God, our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is. 'Is this really possible?' Why, my dear friends, how would you like to be governed by a ruler who had not been through all the vicissitudes of life that are common to mortals? If he had not suffered, how could he sympathise (sic) with the distress of others? If he himself had not endured the same, how could he sympathise (sic) and be touched with the feelings of our infirmities? He could not, unless he himself had passed through the same ordeal, and overcome step by step." (Orson Hyde in *JD*, 1:123.)

GOD IS NOW AN EXALTED MAN WITH POWERS OF ETERNAL INCREASE

(1-4) Our Father in Heaven Lives in an Exalted Marriage Relationship

"No matter to what heights God has attained or may attain, he does not stand alone; for side by side with him, in all her glory, a glory like unto his, stands a companion, the Mother of his children. For as we have a Father in heaven, so

also we have a Mother there, a glorified, exalted, ennobled Mother." (Melvin J. Ballard, as quoted in Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard*, pp. 205-6.)

(1-5) We Are Literal Children of God, Part of His Family Unit

"We are the children of God, our Heavenly Father. We are members of his family. We are his spirit offspring. We were born in the premortal life as spirit beings, sons and daughters of a glorified, perfected, exalted being. This holy being himself lives in the family unit. He has a fullness of glory and power and might and dominion. . . . We are the literal offspring of the most glorious personage of whom it is possible to conceive. He is God Almighty, our Heavenly Father." (Bruce R. McConkie, "Households of Faith," *Ensign*, Apr. 1971, p. 4.)

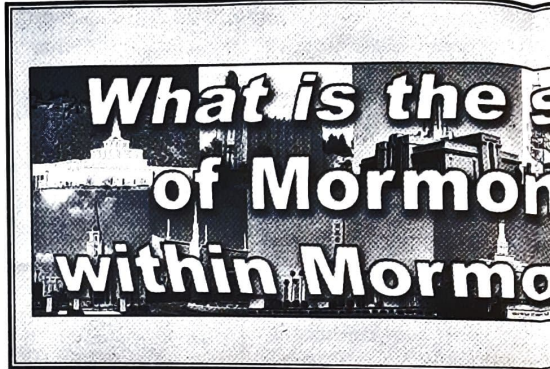
(1-6) We Lived with Our Heavenly Parents Prior to Coming to Earth

"I want to tell you, each and every one of you, that you are well acquainted with God our Heavenly Father, or the great Elohim. You are all well acquainted with him, for there is not a soul of you but what has lived in his house and dwelt with him year after year; and yet you are seeking to become acquainted with him, when the fact is, you have merely forgotten what you did know." (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 50.)

MEN ARE GODS IN EMBRYO

(1-7) We Have the Potential to Become like Our Heavenly Parents

"Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of our earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages of aeons, of evolving into a God." (The First Presidency [F. Smith, John R. Winder, Anthon H. Lund I., "The Origin of Man," *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1909, p. 81.)



(1-8) This Potential Was Transmitted to Us Through Our Spiritual Birth

"We were born in the image of God our Father, he begot us like unto himself. There is the nature of deity in the composition of our spiritual organization; in our spiritual birth, our Father transmitted to us the capabilities, powers and faculties which he himself possessed, as much so as the child on its mother's bosom possesses, although in an undeveloped state, the faculties, powers and susceptibilities of its parent." (Lorenzo Snow, *Deseret Weekly News*, 20:597.)

(1-9) Exaltation Is Attained "by Going from One Small Degree to Another"

"Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. . . .

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation." (Smith, *Teachings*, pp. 346-48.)

EXALTATION IS ATTAINABLE ONLY IN FAMILY UNITS

(1-10) The Family Is the Basic Unit of Time and Eternity

"Eternal families have their

beginning in celestial marriage here in mortality. Faithful members of them continue in the family unit in eternity, in the highest heaven of the celestial world, where they have eternal increase. (D. & C. 131:1-4; 132:16-32.) Perfect peace and a full endowment of all good graces attend such eternal families. By obedience to the laws of the gospel (which are celestial laws), Latter-day-Saint families begin here and now to enjoy much of that peace, joy, love, and charity which will be enjoyed in eternal fulness (sic) in the exalted family unit." (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 273.)

(1-11) Family Units Sealed by Priesthood Authority Remain Intact Throughout Eternity

"Through the restoration of the priesthood held by Elijah, knowledge has been given to the Church that each family unit, where the parents have been married for time and for eternity, shall remain intact through all eternity. Moreover, each family unit is to be linked to the generation which went before, until all the faithful, who have proved their title to family membership through obedience to the gospel, shall be joined in one grand family from the beginning to the end of time, and shall find place in the celestial kingdom of God. In this way all who receive the exaltation become heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in the possession of eternal family relationships. . . .

"Eventually, when this work is perfected, and Christ delivers up to his Father the keys and makes his report, and death is destroyed, then that great family from the days of Adam down, of all the righteous, those who have kept the commandments of God, will find that they are one family, the family of God, entitled to all the blessings that pertain to the exaltation." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:67-68.)

Celestial Marriage

significance in Temples on Theology?

ONLY THROUGH CELESTIAL MARRIAGE CAN A PERSON BECOME LIKE GOD

(1-12) The Lord Commands Marriage

"Many people imagine that there is something sinful in marriage; there is an apostate tradition to that effect. This is a false and very harmful idea. To the contrary, God not only commends but He commands marriage. While man was yet immortal, before sin had entered the world, our Heavenly Father Himself performed the first marriage. He united our first parents in the bonds of holy matrimony and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. This command He has never changed, abrogated or annulled; but it has continued in force throughout all the generations of mankind." (Joseph F. Smith, *Juvenile Instructor*, 1 July 1902, p. 400.)

(1-13) Exaltation Is Based on Celestial Marriage

"If you want salvation in the fullest, that is exaltation in the kingdom of God, so that you may become his sons and his daughters, you have got to go into the temple of the Lord and receive these holy ordinances which belong to that house, which cannot be had elsewhere. No man shall receive the fulness of eternity, of exaltation, alone, no woman shall receive that blessing alone; but man and wife, when they receive the sealing power in the temple of the Lord, if they thereafter keep all the commandments, shall pass on to exaltation, and shall continue and become like the Lord. And that is the destiny of men; that is what the Lord desires for his children." (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:43-44.)

(1-14) "Then Shall They Be Gods, Because They Have No End"

"But if we are married for time and for all eternity and it is sealed upon our heads by those who have the authority so to seal, and if we then keep our covenants and are faithful to the end, we shall come forth in the resurrection from the dead and receive the following promised blessings:

"Then shall they be gods.

"So if you want to enter into exaltation and become as God, that is a son of God or a daughter of God, and receive a fulness (sic) of the kingdom, then you have got to abide in his law—not merely the law of marriage but all that pertains to the new and everlasting covenant—and then you have the 'continuation of the lives' forever, for the Lord says:

"This is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.' (D&C 132:24.)" (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:62-63.)

(1-15) Only Resurrected and Glorified Beings May Become Parents of Spirit Offspring

"So far as the stages of eternal progression and attainment have been made known through divine revelation, we are to understand that only resurrected and glorified beings can become parents of spirit offspring. Only such exalted souls have reached maturity in the appointed course of eternal life; and the spirits born to them in the eternal worlds will pass in due sequence through the several stages or estates by which the glorified parents have attained exaltation." (A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency [F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, Charles W. Penrose] and the Twelve, "The Father and the Son," *Improvement Era*, June 1916, p.

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE BRINGS MANY BLESSINGS

(1-16) Celestial Marriage Has Benefits for This Life As Well As Eternity

"... Young men and young women who would live the happiest lives would do well to prepare themselves to be worthy of that form of marriage which God has ordained—the union of a man and woman worthy to have their marriage solemnized in the temple of the Most High. There as true lovers kneel to plight their troth, each may cherish the assurance of the following:

"First, that their married course begins in purity. The children who come to bless the union are guaranteed a royal birth so far as inheriting a clean body is concerned.

"Second, that their religious views are the same. The difficulty of rearing children properly is aggravated when Father and Mother have divergent views regarding doctrine and church affiliation. (Another great advantage of seminaries, auxiliaries, Sunday School, etc., you meet those of your own Church!)

"Third, that their vows are made with the idea of an eternal union, not to be broken by petty misunderstandings or difficulties.

"Fourth, that a covenant made in God's presence and sealed by the Holy Priesthood is more binding than any other bond.

"Fifth, that a marriage thus commenced is as eternal as love, the divinest (sic) attribute of the human soul.

"Sixth, that the family unit will remain unbroken throughout eternity." (David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals*, p. 465.)

(1-17) Celestial Marriage Prepares Men to Be Kings and Priests unto God

"Those who endure in perfect faith, who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, and who gain the blessings of the temple (including celestial marriage) are eventually ordained kings and priests. These are offices given faithful holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and in them they will bear rule as exalted beings during the millennium and in eternity. (Rev. 1:6; 5:10.)" (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 599.)

(1-18) Celestial Marriage Makes Women Queens and Priestesses unto Their Husbands

"If righteous men have power through the gospel and its crowning ordinance of celestial marriage to become kings and priests to rule in exaltation forever, it follows that the women by their side (without whom they cannot attain exaltation) will be queens and priestesses. (Rev. 1:6; 5:10.) 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." (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.613.)

(1-19) Celestial Marriage Makes It Possible for Us to Claim Our Mortal Children in Eternity As Well As to Propagate Ourselves Throughout Eternity

"Parents will have eternal claim upon their posterity and will have the gift of eternal increase, if they obtain the exaltation. This is the crowning glory in the kingdom of God, and they will have no end. When the Lord says they will have no end, he means that all who attain to this glory will have the blessing of the continuation of the 'seeds' forever. Those who fail to obtain this blessing come to the 'deaths,' which means that they will have no increase, forever. All who obtain this exaltation will have the privilege of completing the full measure of their existence, and they will have a posterity that will be as innumerable as the stars of heaven..."

"The Father has promised us that through our faithfulness we shall be blessed with the fulness (sic) of his kingdom. In other words we will have the privilege of becoming like him. To become like him we must have all the powers of godhood; thus a man and his wife when glorified will have spirit children who eventually will go on an earth like this one we are on and pass through the same kind of experiences, being subject to mortal conditions, and if faithful, then they also will receive the fulness

(sic) of exaltation and partake of the same blessings. There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring. We will have an endless eternity for this." (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:43-44, 48.)

(1-20) SUMMARY

As shown in this chapter, our Father in heaven was once a man as we are now, capable of physical death. By obedience to eternal gospel principles, he progressed from one stage of life to another until he attained the state that we call exaltation or godhood. In such a condition, he and our mother in heaven were empowered to give birth to spirit children whose potential was equal to that of their heavenly parents. We are those spirit children.

We have also seen that the family is the basic unit of society, both in time and in eternity. Only those couples who are sealed in the bonds of celestial marriage by the powers of the holy priesthood of God may expect to enjoy the great blessing of perpetuating their family units throughout eternity. It is this fact that makes marriage in a temple of God such an important step in our eternal progression. Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written this:

"Celestial marriage is a holy and an eternal ordinance; as an order of the priesthood, it has the name the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Adam was the first one on this earth to enter into this type of union, and it has been the Lord's order in all ages when the fulness (sic) of the gospel has been on earth. Its importance in the plan of salvation and exaltation cannot be overestimated. The most important things that any member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ever does in this world are: 1. To marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority; and 2. To keep the covenant made in connection with this holy and perfect order of matrimony—thus assuring the obedient persons of an inheritance of exaltation in the celestial kingdom." *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 118.)

Celestial Law from page one

achieving the celestial is out of the question. 12th LDS President Spencer W. Kimball taught that there is "no progression between kingdoms. After a person has been assigned to his place in the kingdom, either in the terrestrial, the terrestrial, or the celestial, or to his exaltation, he will never advance from his assigned glory to another glory. That is eternal!" (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.50.)

"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. Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie stated: "One of the great purposes of this mortal probation is to test and try men, to see if they will keep the commandments and walk in the light no matter what environmental enticements beckon them away from the straight and narrow path" (Mormon Doctrine, pg.229). The purpose of this lifetime is for the Mormon to prove himself worthy of exaltation. To fail in that capacity will result in never reaching that celestial goal.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said that if a person refuses to comply with the provided laws and ordinances during this lifetime, they will be "assigned, after the resurrection, to some inferior space." (Doctrines of Salvation 1:69) This concurs with Alma 34:32-33, which states, "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... And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed." It seems clear that while some Mormons feel they can get things right after death, this is not supported by LDS teaching.

"What About Repentance?"

When confronted with this serious dilemma, many Latter-day Saints resort to the doctrine of repentance. While repenting of one's sins sounds like the logical remedy, it is really self-defeating when one looks at the whole Mormon picture. Bear in mind LDS leaders have stressed that "obedience" to the whole law is the requirement for exaltation, not repentance. The fact that a Mormon has to repent really proves he is not living up to the strict guidelines laid down by the LDS leadership. In other words, he is not obeying celestial law. If he was, he would have no need to repent. Ironically, every time a Mormon repents of his shortcomings and sins, he is doing nothing more than admitting to his God that he is unworthy of a celestial exaltation.

Even more damning for the

Mormon is Spencer Kimball's definition of true repentance. He taught that the "repentance which merits forgiveness" is the kind in which "the former transgressor must have reached a 'point of no return' to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation but also a deep abhorrence of the sin - where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, pp.354-355). We know of no Mormon who has accomplished such a feat. Who can say they have actually reached a point in their life where the desire or urge to sin is no longer a problem? Apparently even the Apostle Paul did not accomplish this (Romans 7:13-24).

President Kimball also said that "living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation" (Miracle, pg. 208). This must present a terrible quandary for the Latter-day Saint, for if the desire or urge to sin is not cleared out of his life, and he is not living all of the commandments, how can he know he is truly forgiven? In his pamphlet entitled Repentance Brings Forgiveness, President Kimball taught, "The forsaking of sin must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit making the same mistake again." A great majority of Mormons with whom we have spoken candidly admit they often sin the same sin twice. Unfortunately, if this is the case, according to Kimball they cannot be assured of forgiveness.

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." If keeping all the commandments is really possible, why is it that no Mormon is doing it?

"But I'm Trying!"

Mormon Apostle Dallin Oaks taught: "The requirement for entry into the celestial kingdom is not that we have actually practiced the entire celestial law while upon this earth, but that we have shown God that we are willing and able to do so" (Pure in Heart, pp. 62-63). However, such comments, while they may appease those who are struggling to abide a celestial law, blatantly contradict those made by past LDS leaders. For instance, LDS Apostle Orson Whitney made it clear that a Mormon's chances for reaching the celestial were good only if he was "keeping" the commandments, not merely willing to keep them. He said, "If today, you are keeping those commandments that are now in force, you are living a celestial law, and your chances are good for celestial glory" (Conference Report, Oct. 1910, pg. 53). Notice he stressed that this must be done "today," not after one dies.

Tenth LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith said compliance with the law, not willingness, was necessary to obtain Godhood. "This mortal probation was to be a brief period, just a short span linking the eternity past with the eter-

nity future. Yet it was to be a period of tremendous importance. It would either give to those who received it the blessing of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God, and thus qualify them for godhood as sons and daughters of our Eternal Father, or, if they rebelled and refused to comply with the laws and ordinances which were provided for their salvation, it would deny them the great gift and they would be assigned, after the resurrection, to some inferior sphere according to their works. This life is the most vital period in our eternal existence (Doctrines of Salvation 1:69).

The Book of Mormon teaches, "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).

Commenting on this passage, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, "These people to whom Amulek was speaking had heard the truth and were not altogether ignorant of the plan of salvation, because they had gone out of the Church by apostasy. So he declared unto them that this is the day for them to repent and turn unto God or they would be lost" (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:181). Are modern Latter-day Saints any more ignorant than the people addressed by Amulek? One would think they would be far more advanced than the Nephites and Lamanites described in the Book of Mormon and therefore just as accountable.

While many Latter-day Saints are willing to do what is right, the ability to do so is not as easy. Still, LDS leaders have stressed the accomplishment of obeying celestial law, not merely a willingness to obey. According to Spencer Kimball, a mere willingness to try to overcome sinful tendencies is not enough. He 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" (Miracle, pp.164-165). Indeed, some Mormons have said, "I do my best and Jesus does the rest." That might be a catchy saying, but the fact is, if a Mormon is actually obeying celestial law, there is nothing left for Jesus to do.

When people are baptized as members in the LDS Church, they promise to keep all of the laws and commandments of God. Naturally they fail, so each week at sacrament service, Latter-day Saints must again commit to keeping the commandments. Each week they fail. Such commitments are again uttered when a Mormon enters one of his hallowed temples. During the endowment ceremony the character playing the part of Lucifer looks at the audience and warns, "If they do not walk up to every covenant they make at these altars in this temple this day, they will be in my power!" If the Mormon really believes this ceremony is of God, and he knows in his heart he is not living up to every covenant he made, wouldn't consistency demand that he is under Lucifer's power?

The fact that the LDS Church

compels its members to make such promises is unreasonable to say the least. No human can live up to such expectations, but day in and day out, the LDS Church makes its people go through what is no doubt a meaningless vow. Each week members make the promise, yet each week they fail to keep the promise. Despite their personal efforts, when they do not live up to such incredible standards, their leadership accuses them of covenant breaking. "Of those who break covenants and promises made in sacred places and in solemn manner, we can apply the Lord's words as follows: '... a wicked man, who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom' (D&C 3:12-13)." (Spencer W. Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p.57.)

Conclusion

If the men quoted above are really prophets and apostles of God and are to be believed as authoritative, then Mormons have plenty to fear for no one can live up to the requirements these men have set forth. It is impossible! That is why 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 our resurrection possible, rather, He came to take away all (not merely "some") of the believer's sins (Col. 2:13). It is our sin which 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 in God's sight (Romans 5:19). When we come to Him by faith, His righteousness is "imputed" (or "added") to us on 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. As long as a person insists that his salvation is dependent on his good works and individual righteousness, he will continue to be frustrated and bear the heavy burden of guilt. Don't be misled! Many Latter-day Saints live under this tremendous load of guilt! It is only when they place their total trust in Christ's righteousness that they will experience the joy and assurance true salvation affords.

Sacred or Secret?

Because those who have participated in the LDS temple endowment ceremony make a covenant to not talk about what goes on inside LDS temples, it is often asserted that this is a "secret ceremony." However, many Mormons object to this description by claiming that the ceremony is not "secret" but rather "sacred."

While it is true that the LDS temple and the ceremonies are sacred to the faithful Latter-day Saint, the fact that what goes on inside is to be kept from public knowledge fits the definition of secret. Since many members of the LDS Church are relatively new converts, most are unaware that the temple ceremony has seen drastic revisions. Before April 1990, the ceremony itself mentioned elements of "secrecy."

For instance, Mormons must learn different handshakes called tokens that they feel are necessary if they hope to be able to return to their God after death. Prior to 1990, each token came with an "obligation of secrecy."

Participants then had to "covenant" never to reveal these secret handshakes even at the peril of their life. Patrons vowed, by repeating in their mind "Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken." The post-1990 ceremony has deleted any reference to secrecy and the threat of their life being taken has also been removed. However, patrons

"Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken."

must still promise never to reveal what they have learned.

The current ceremony has certainly been toned down from earlier versions. For instance, in the 1931 version, patrons, upon learning the first token of the Aaronic Priesthood, had to promise that if the token were somehow to be revealed, their throats would be "cut from ear to ear" and their "tongues torn out by their roots" (Temple Mormonism: Its Evolution, Ritual, and Meaning, Published by A.J. Montgomery, 1941, p. 18).

To be sure, none of this has any connection with the temple ceremony of ancient Israel.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us"
Titus 3:5

Washing and Anointing Rooms – Off Limits to Visitors

Visitors to an LDS temple open house are given the impression that nothing will be hidden from view in this unique building. However, experience has shown that visitors are not normally allowed to visit a very special area of the temple where patrons (temple participants) are ceremoniously "washed and anointed."

After being granted entrance into the temple, the patron then enters a locker room (men are separated from the women). It is curious to note that each locker comes equipped with a lock and key.

In the locker room, street clothes are taken off and a poncho-like "shield" is put on. Wearing nothing but the shield, the patron enters an area of the temple that contains the washing and anointing rooms. Again, men are separated from the women.

The temple participant enters one of several small booths where a temple worker ceremoniously "washes and anoints" the patron.

During the washing ritual the temple worker wets his/her fingers, and "laying hands" on the patron's head, recites the following words: "...I wash your head, that your brain and your intellect may be clear and active; your ears, that you may hear the word of the Lord; your eyes, that you may see clearly and discern between truth and error; your nose, that you may smell; your lips, that you may never speak guile; your neck, that it may bear up your head properly; your shoulders, that they may bear the burdens that shall be placed thereon; your back, that there may be marrow in the bones and in the spine; your breast, that it may be the receptacle of pure and virtuous principles; your vitals and bowels, that they may be healthy and strong and perform their proper functions; your arms and your hands, that they may be strong and wield the sword of justice in defense of truth and virtue; your loins, that you may be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, that you may have joy and rejoicing in your posterity; your legs and feet, that you may run and not be weary, and walk and not faint."

Two temple workers then lay their hands upon the patron's head, one of whom prayerfully "confirms" the washing. The patron is then ceremoniously anointed with olive oil. A similar invocation is recited, followed again by a "confirmation."

After this the patron puts on a special piece of clothing known as the "Garment of the Holy Priesthood." Mormons are told in the ceremony that this garment "represents the garment given to Adam when he was found naked in the Garden of Eden, and is called the Garment of the Holy Priesthood. Inasmuch as you do not defile it, but are true and faithful to your covenants, it will be a shield and a protection to you against the power of the destroyer until you have finished your work here on earth."

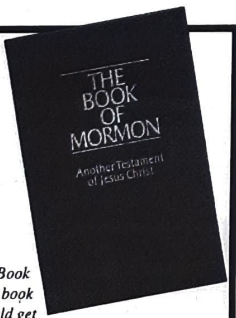
Twelfth Mormon President Spencer W. Kimball agreed that the garment offers spiritual, mental, and even "an actual physical protection" to the faithful Latter-day Saint who wears them. See page 539 of the book, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*.

Sewn into the garment are button-hole-type markings that are to remind the Mormon of vows made during the temple ceremony. Latter-day Saints are admonished to wear the temple garment 24 hours a day.

What the Book of Mormon Doesn't Tell You

Joseph Smith declared that the *Book of Mormon* was the "most correct book on earth" and that 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 that by reading the *Book of Mormon* they can get a detailed understanding of what LDS doctrine really is. The problem is a person could read the entire *Book of Mormon* from 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*, as fictional as they are, do not resemble early Latter-day Saints at all. They did not believe that God was once a man, nor is there any hint that they felt there existed a plurality of Gods or that they had the ability to become Gods in the next life. The *Book of Mormon* never talks about three degrees of glory nor does it teach that marriage can be for "time and eternity." The doctrines of eternal progression, pre-existence, and baptism for the dead are also suspiciously missing from this book, as is the idea that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers.



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 it, in fact, is a Christian church. 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, they represent the true Christian faith as Jesus and His apostles originally handed it down. The inconsistency lies in the fact that the LDS Church has questioned the Christianity of all non-Mormons since it was organized in 1830.

Joseph Smith, 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 asked these personages which church he should join, he said 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 groveling 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

"What is the church of the devil in our day, and where is the seat of her power? ...it is modern Christianity in all its parts."

Bruce McConkie



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 offend 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*, pg. 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. xi).

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

fect 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 *Doctrine and Covenants* (1:30) leaves no doubt to the Mormon teaching of exclusivity when it says 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 also demonstrated in the LDS temple ceremony. Here, a character that portrayed a Christian minister was hired by Lucifer to preach the orthodox religion. This orthodox religion included believing in a God of Spirit who was surrounded by a myriad of beings who had been saved by grace.

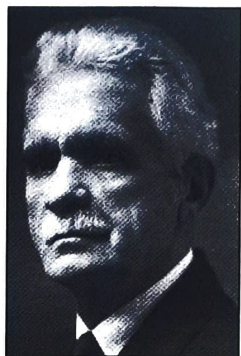
When such information became public knowledge, Christians were outraged. The LDS Church removed these offensive portions from their ceremony in 1990. However, the idea of a God of Spirit and salvation by grace alone is still considered anathema by the LDS Church. For instance, LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie 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 an individual or organization were to come along and claim to represent Mormonism but instead denied or distorted the doctrines that make Mormonism what it is, such an individual or organization would be quickly challenged and denounced by Latter-day Saints everywhere. When LDS leaders deny or distort doctrines held dear by Christians, does it not make sense that their claim to Christianity should be challenged as well?

"Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"

**B.H. Roberts
LDS Seventy**



The Troubling Story of a Self-Proclaimed American Prophet

Joseph Smith was a man of troubling contradictions. On the one hand, he was spiritual leader of undoubted vision and charisma, who inspired his followers to heroic sacrifices in the name of building God's kingdom on earth. But it was this same man's well-documented deceptions and secret sexual affairs¹ that set in motion the very chain of events that led to his brutal murder.²

The original Kirtland (Ohio) and Nauvoo (Illinois) temples, dedicated in 1836 and 1846, illustrate Joseph's grand vision and his charismatic ability to motivate ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary feats. Both were built at great expense through the sacrificial labor and giving of the Mormon people. The final cost of the original Nauvoo temple exceeded \$1,000,000 (nearly \$15 million in today's money). With a tower and spire reportedly visible from a distance of twenty miles, it showcased an architectural scale and sophistication unparalleled in frontier America.³

Yet, while early Latter-day Saints celebrated the construction of these first temples, Joseph's life was marked by tensions from within and without the LDS community. These were the result of Smith's long history of involvement in folk magic and divination, his secret sexual affairs and radical theological innovations, all of which stand in stark contrast to the highly moral and sedate image of today's Mormonism.

Before starting a new religious movement, Joseph Smith, along with his family, practiced various forms of folk magic. Perhaps the best documented are Smith's money-digging activities wherein he would claim to see treasure buried underground by putting a magical seer stone in his hat then covering his face with the hat.⁴ Joseph admitted to being a money digger though he said it was never very profitable for him.⁵ He used this same divination technique to find and "translate" the Book of Mormon and with his stone claimed to get divine revelations for some of his followers.⁶

Joseph's use of revelations to justify his actions is exemplified in his moral life. Starting with his secret liaison with Fannie Alger from 1833-36, Joseph engaged in numerous clandestine sexual relationships. When Oliver Cowdery, then an assistant president to Smith, went public with what he termed the "dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his [Joseph Smith's] and Fanny Algers," Smith charged Cowdery with adultery and had him excommunicated.⁷ LDS Church historians refer to the Alger affair as Smith's "first polygamous marriage." It was not his last, as Smith had plural marriage relationships with at least 33 women before his death. He would privately approach a young woman or the parents of a teenage girl and claim God had commanded him to enter into "celestial marriage" that would bind them together for eternity. Following a brief ceremony officiated by a trusted follower, he would consummate the marriage. Joseph did

not publicly acknowledge these relationships, and was able to hide them for a time from both Emma his wife and the general LDS community.⁸ However, before long Emma and other Mormon leaders learned that Joseph was indeed teaching and practicing plural marriage, yet denying it publicly. This produced deep offense among his own followers in the spring of 1844 and started a chain of events that led to his arrest, incarceration, and ultimately his death at the hands of a vicious mob.

Marital tensions from polygamy aside, Joseph was at the height of his power and influence. He was Lieutenant commander of the largest private militia in the United States, was mayor of Nauvoo, a city rivaling Chicago in population, prophet of a growing church, a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and self-proclaimed King backed by a clandestine Council of Fifty, many of them fellow Masons sworn to secrecy on penalty of death.⁹ However, opposition by several key leaders threatened to unravel Joseph's kingdom. Among them were William Law, Wilson Law, and Robert Foster. These men opposed on moral grounds Joseph's plural marriages as well as his disreputable land dealings, buying land and selling it at ten times the price for personal gain.

When Law, Law and Foster refused to be brought into line they were excommunicated. In response, these men, along with several other prominent Nauvoo citizens, published their own newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*. In it they exposed Joseph Smith's polygamy and deceit, complete with sworn affidavits, his unethical land dealings, and decried his latest theological innovations — the teaching that there were multiple Gods over and above the Creator God of this universe. In their eyes Smith had forfeited any right to be a prophet for he was living in unrepentant immorality and introducing teachings that directly contradicted the Bible. Smith convened a city council meeting on June 10, 1844, declared the *Expositor* "a public nuisance," and ordered it destroyed.¹⁰ The public outcry against this breach of the Bill of Rights led to Joseph being jailed in nearby Carthage, Illinois. On June 27, 1844 around 5:00 p.m. a mob of about 250 men stormed the Carthage Jail and brutally murdered Joseph Smith. The man known as prophet, president, mayor, militia commander and king was dead.

Joseph Smith's murder was unwarranted and unjustified, but it, perhaps more than any single thing guaranteed the survival of the unique aspects of Mormon religion. Plural marriage, secret temple rituals, and radical theological innovations like the plurality of Gods, and men themselves becoming gods to rule over their own planets, would be carried by Brigham Young to Salt Lake City where they would become the warp and woof of Latter-day religion for the next 50 years.

"Smith had plural marriage relationships with at least 33 women before his death."

Though downplayed today by the LDS Church, these were doctrines that defined and distinguished Mormon religion from the rest of what was termed apostate Christendom. They remain the legacy of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet.

¹ See Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, (Signature Books, 1997), and Linda Newell & Valeen Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994). The authors of both these works are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

² History of the Church, Vol. 6, Ch. 34, p. 617.

³ Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, (New York: MacMillan, 1992), Vol. 3, s.v. "Nauvoo Temple," p. 1001.

⁴ Richard and Joan Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise*, (Harper San Francisco, 1999), p. 25.

⁵ *History of the Church*, v. 3, p. 29

⁶ LDS author Richard S. Van Wagoner wrote, "This stone, still retained by the First Presidency of the LDS Church, was the vehicle through which the golden plates were discovered and the medium through which their interpretation came (Sidney Rigdon: *A Portrait of Religious Excess*, Signature Books, SLC, 1994, p. 57). See also, James E. Lancaster, "By the Gift and Power of God,"

Saints Herald, 109:22 (November 15, 1962) pp. 14-18, 22, 33; Edward H. Ashment, "The Book of Mormon — A Literal Translation," *Sunstone*, 5:2 (March-April 1980), pp. 10-14; Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker in "Joseph Smith: The Gift of Seeing," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 15:2 (Summer 1982), pp. 48-68; Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 20:1 (Spring 1987), pp. 66-123.

⁷ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), p. 45-46.

⁸ Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*, (Signature Books, 1997), pp. 1-19.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105ff; 128-136.

¹⁰ Newell & Avery, p. 181.

By the Institute for Religious Research. For documentation, see contact information on the back of this paper.

Is the term "Anti-Mormon" reasonable?

Mormons are wary of accepting any literature that proposes a view different from what current Mormon authorities present as truth. The LDS church uses the label "anti-Mormon" for any work critical of its teachings. Is it possible to disagree with Mormonism without being labeled as an "anti-Mormon"? Is this a reasonable charge?

For many Latter-Day Saints, the word, "anti-Mormon," is quite intimidating, perhaps more so than the word "cult" is to the average American. It is not uncommon when Christian literature is being distributed to have one Mormon say to another, "That's anti-Mormon, don't take it." It is an effective tactic, but not necessarily a reasonable charge to make.

Consider the fact that denominations within Christianity have differing views on secondary doctrines. It is common practice for Christians to critique and debate with each other regarding these differences. It is

interesting to note that when Baptists disagree with and critique Methodists on the proper mode for baptism, the Methodists do not consider the Baptists as being "anti-Methodist." The Methodists rightly realize that they are not being persecuted. Instead, they accept the analysis and view it as an "in-house" debate. In other words, they agree to disagree in an agreeable manner.

Since Mormons believe that they are legitimate Christians, why don't they respond the same way that Methodists do? This question is magnified when we realize that the 56,000 Mormon missionaries worldwide regularly bear witness that their Church is "only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (*D&C 1:30*) and that when they affirm this, they are condemning all other churches as false. Why is it that when Mormons make these declarations, it is acceptable, but when others do it, it is unacceptable or unfair? If the LDS Church wants to

be accepted as a part of the Christian community, then, at the very least, they need to stop referring to themselves as "the only true church." The fact is, Mormonism teaches that all other churches are, "wrong... that all their creeds are, an abomination in his [God's] sight." (*Joseph Smith-History 1:19*)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is making inconsistent and unreasonable demands. They want their Church to be accepted by Christians as legitimate Christianity while denying that right to the very Churches that they demand acceptance from. When other churches respond with legitimate criticism, the Mormon Church accuses them of being anti-Mormon. If criticism of another church means that you are an "anti," then would that not make the Mormon Church "anti-Christian?"

By Evidence Ministries. For documentation, see contact information on the back of this paper.

Would you like more information? The following ministries will be more than happy to answer any further questions you might have concerning the differences between Mormonism and Biblical Christianity.

Calvary South Austin
5419 South Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78745
Phone: 512-576-LIFE (5433)
E-mail: info@calvarysouthaustin.com
Website: www.calvarysouthaustin.com

Evidence Ministries
P.O. Box 690371
San Antonio, TX 78269
E-mail: info@evidenceministries.org
Website: www.evidenceministries.org

H.I.S. Ministries International
Dennis & Rauni Higley
P.O. Box 900415, Sandy, Utah 84090
E-mail: hismin@xmission.com
Website: www.hismin.com

Institute For Religious Research
1340 Monroe Ave. N.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Phone: 616-451-4562
Fax: (616) 451-8907
E-mail: info@irr.org Website: www.irr.org

MormonSun Research Ministry
P.O. Box 1746,
Draper, Utah 84020-1746
Website: www.mrmn.org

Watchman Fellowship, TX
P.O. Box 13340
Arlington, TX 76094
Phone: 817-277-0023
Fax: 817-277-8098
E-mail: JWalker@watchman.org
Website: www.watchman.org

Watchman Fellowship, Utah
P.O. Box 295
Payson, UT 84651
Phone: 801-754-1206
E-mail: teowfi@hotmail.com
Website: www.watchman.org

Word for the Weary
P.O. Box 46571
Eden Prairie, Minnesota 55346
Phone: 952-937-0934
E-mail: info@questioningmormonism.org
Website: www.QuestioningMormonism.org