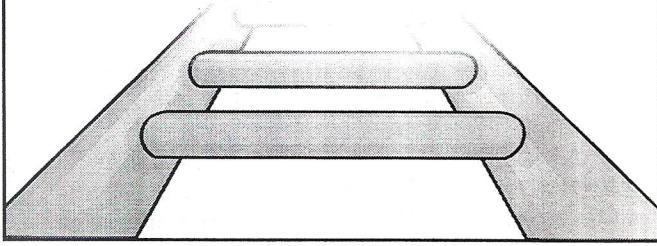


# THE IMPOSSIBLE GOSPEL



The key question of any faith system is simply this: 'How is one saved; how can one have eternal life?' Every faith system on our planet provides some mechanism by which we can be united to God, be in His presence, or attain the ultimate life in eternity, including Mormonism.

## **Salvation through Mormonism**

In Mormonism, 'General' Salvation comes to everyone on the planet, and is provided by the atonement of Jesus Christ. It is simply resurrection after death. This is NOT the ultimate goal of the Mormon believer or their desire when they hope for salvation:

"Those who gain only this general or unconditional salvation will still be judged according to their works and receive places in a Terrestrial or Telestial kingdom. They will, therefore, be damned; their eternal progression will be cut short; they will not fill the full measure of their creation, but in eternity will be ministering servants to more worthy persons." (Bruce McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pg 669-670, 1966 Edition)

Therefore, the eternal life that faithful Mormons seek is not 'general' Salvation, but a 'true', 'full' and 'individual' Salvation that results in exaltation to Godhood.

"Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the Father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation. If we prove faithful to the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will

become exalted, just like our Heavenly Father. Exaltation is the greatest gift that Heavenly Father can give his children." (Gospel Principles, Chapter 47, Exaltation, see D&C 14:7)

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### **Faith is NOT Enough**

"Salvation comes by grace, faith and works. Unless a man will adhere to the doctrine and walk in faith, accepting the truth and observing the commandments as they have been given, it will be impossible for him to receive eternal life, no matter how much he may confess with his lips that Jesus is the Christ, or believe that his Father sent him into the world for the redemption of man... So it is necessary, not merely that we believe, but that we repent, and in faith perform good works until the end; and then shall we receive the reward of the faithful and a place in the celestial kingdom of God." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith, 2:311)

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### **Mormonism Requires Perfection**

In order to be saved, one must attain perfection through complete repentance and obedience to the laws of Moses, the teachings of Jesus and the words and direction of the Mormon prophets. Mormon prophets teach the idea that perfection is possible and necessary for eternal life (exaltation):

"This progress toward eternal life is a matter of achieving perfection. Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation through that perfection which comes by complying with the formula the Lord gave us. In his Sermon on the Mount he made the command to all men: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' (Matt. 5:48)

Being perfect means to triumph over sin. This is a mandate from the Lord. He is just and wise and kind. He would never require anything from his children which was not for their benefit and which was not attainable. Perfection therefore is an achievable goal." (Spencer Kimball, Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, p. 386)

"Complete obedience brings eternal life. But to be exalted one must keep the whole law ... to receive the exaltation of the righteous, in other words eternal life, the commandments of the Lord must be kept in all things." (Joseph

Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith, 2:6)

But is it even possible for any of us to be perfect? You know yourself well enough to know where your flaws are, and that they disqualify you from the status of 'perfect'. What would it take to attain perfection in this life? What would you have to do to stop being the broken, imperfect creature that you are, and become perfect in the eyes of God?

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### **Perfection Means Stopping ALL Present Sin**

You must STOP and repent from all sin immediately and for all time.

"True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light. Not only so, but to make restitution, so far as it is possible, for all the wrongs we have done, to pay our debts, and restore to God and man their rights - that which is due them from us. This is true repentance, and the exercise of the will and all the powers of body and mind is demanded, to complete this glorious work of repentance." (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 149)

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### **Mormons Must NOT Repeat Past Sins**

Repentance, for the Mormon, means that you may NEVER return to your past sin! In fact, if a sin you've abandoned and been forgiven of should reappear in your life, all the past sin will no longer be forgiven, but will actually be added back to your account:

**D&C 82: 7** Unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.

"To return to sin is most destructive to the morale of the individual and gives Satan another handhold on his victim. Those who feel that they can sin and be forgiven and then return to their sin and be forgiven again and again must straighten out their thinking. Each previously forgiven sin is added to the new one and the whole gets to be a heavy load." (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 170)



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### **Trying Is NOT Good Enough**

The idea that you are only called to do the best that you can do, and that God will honor that and do the 'rest' of the work ('I do my best and Jesus does the rest.') is clearly not reflected in the proclamations of the church and of Mormon prophets. Trying hard is never good enough:

"There is one crucial test of repentance. This is abandonment of the sin. Desire is not sufficient. In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his ways and started on a new path... the saving power does not extend to him who merely wants to change his life. Trying is not sufficient." (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 163)

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### **You Can't Wait To Do It Later**

The notion that you will have an opportunity after death to get things in order defies both Biblical theology, which tells us that this life is our only chance to respond to the message of Jesus Christ, and also goes against the teaching of the LDS church:

**Alma 34:33** ...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 to prepare 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.

"There is no progression between kingdoms. After a person has been assigned to his place in the kingdom, either in the telestial, the terrestrial, or the celestial, or to his exaltation, he will never advance from his assigned glory to another glory. That is eternal!" (Spencer Kimball, The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.50.)

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### **Eternal Life Depends on YOUR Perfection**

As a Mormon, if you never know if you have been good enough, then you are left wondering if you can enter into eternal life. You have no assurance of full and complete salvation:

"There must be works - many works - and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit.' It depends on you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your

sincerity, your works, your attitudes.” (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p.325)

### **The Impossible Gospel**

Clearly, as a Mormon, you have a dilemma. You have a Gospel that is impossible to receive because it requires a perfection you can never accomplish. Remember, the Christ of Mormonism can only get you to a general salvation, but exaltation is up to you.

**Alma 11:37** And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven... Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins.

“After this instruction, you will be responsible for your own sins; it is a desirable honor that you should so walk before our heavenly Father as to save yourselves; we are all responsible to God for the manner we improve the light and wisdom given by our Lord to enable us to save ourselves.” (Joseph Smith Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1976, p. 227)

### **Know the Truth**

**1 John 5:9-14** We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

God uses the word 'know' here for a reason. It is what is known as a 'present imperative' and it tells us that we can know right now. We can have certainty right now. God's testimony is that we can know today that we already have eternal life, because this free gift is not the result of anything we do, but based on our faith alone.

### **Perfect by Christ**

God clearly tells us in the scriptures that He requires perfection in that perfect place called Heaven. If we ever hope to join God, if we ever

hope to be saved and be in His presence, we are going to have to be perfected:

**Matthew 5:48** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Yet we are also told in the scriptures that you can never attain perfection through any good works that you could perform:

**Galatians 3:3** Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

So how then can we be perfect if we can't do anything to attain our own perfection? Our perfection is bestowed upon us as the free gift of Jesus Christ. We are made perfect in the eyes of God by the sacrifice of the one truly perfect man, Jesus Christ:

**Hebrews 10:10-14** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Christians understand that perfection has never been something that we could attain on our own. It has always been a free gift from God. And any Gospel other than the historic, orthodox Christian Gospel of Grace is offensive to God. The 'Grace' of God is an undeserved free gift of which there is no payment. If we contribute to the gift of salvation in even the slightest way, it is no longer a gift! It is no longer Grace! To trust our own effort is to distort the Christian Gospel beyond the patience of God:

**Galatians 1:7-9** I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel - not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to change the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than what we have preached to you, a curse be on him! As we have said before, I now say again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!

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