

The Mormon Plan of Salvation, Part 1

It would be possible to quote literally mountains of material on the LDS plan of salvation. As with the Roman Catholic dogmas, there is truly no question as to the actual doctrines, even though the LDS Church tries to avoid directly confronting the prospective member with the more unusual beliefs at first. When the initial ideas are accepted, then the new member is slowly brought into a more complete exposition of LDS beliefs. We are doing the opposite by directly confronting these unBiblical doctrines. At the same time as LDS Elders soft-pedal the unusual definitions they use, we will confront them as well, so as to show clearly the differences which the LDS Church would like to obscure.

Our first point of reference is to remember (Q1) that Jesus is truly the creator. Thus, the entire LDS scheme of cosmology and redemption falls at its beginning. In the LDS scheme, the Father is the creator. But he can't even make that claim, since the intelligences of all people who will live on the earth already exist. He does not have the power to create them. Similarly, the primordial matter of the universe exists eternally. All God does is "organize" it. Contrast this with the Hebrew of Gen 1:1. In the beginning God "*bara*'ed" the heavens and the earth. This Hebrew word carries the thought of creation *ex nihilo*, or from nothingness.

As we continue down the LDS scheme, we find the Father siring all of the inhabitants of the universe in a conventional sexual manner. This is possible because he has wives with whom he has been sealed for eternity in his prior life. They have become his eternal consorts and literal mothers to all people. When a child is sired, an "intelligence" then inhabits the offspring who becomes a spirit child. When a child is born on earth, then a spirit being inhabits that child. The reason that the child has no memory of his spirit existence is that it is "veiled" so as to not bias his life on earth.

The very first child of this Father was Jesus (Q2). Lucifer was one of his brothers in the spirit world. What a contrast with the Bible! This doctrine could not stand if the Bible were respected by Mormons. However, with Progressive Revelation, anything can become true. It is possible to have a truly anthropomorphic god, as one LDS Apostle has explicitly stated. In this kind of theology (Q3), the scriptures are whatever the General Authorities declare them to be, and the prophets are the current General Authorities. We should contrast this with the statement of Isaiah 8:20, which makes it clear that all new doctrinal statements must agree with the Law of Moses and the Testimony of the prophets who have gone before.

The consequences of this LDS doctrine must be contemplated. Unlike the beauty of a totally consistent, totally pure and holy God "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17 KJV, Mormon 9:9), we have a God whose character becomes a product of the whim of fallible man. In the Roman Catholic world, a sinner might never be able to know when he was in a state of grace, but at least he knew who God (however incorrect the picture) was. His God did not change. The Mormon god is constantly changing. Not only is he growing in knowledge, the knowledge of who he is is changing unpredictably. While the General Authorities may pay lip service to stability, the changes in doctrine regarding plural marriage and Negroes gaining the priesthood show that their god changes when needs are perceived by men. The ultimate insecurity of this cannot be overstated. When Peter said we could be sure about our calling (2 Peter 1:10), he was relying on an unchanging God. No Mormon can have this security because his god changes.

LDS doctrine makes Lucifer into Jesus' brother by very ordinary procreation. But the Bible (Q4) gives us a very different picture. Rather than being God's son, Lucifer was a created being, the covering cherub. Ezekiel points this out twice, so it cannot be ignored. But LDS doctrine (Q5) goes further. Lucifer is pictured as participating in the cosmic planning for salvation. The difference between Jesus and Lucifer was that Jesus would be the Savior, but would refer all glory back to the Father while Lucifer wished to keep the glory for himself. In other words, Lucifer wanted to be God by claiming the Glory. How curious it is that Lucifer was thrown out of heaven for asking for exactly the same thing that LDS theology promises to its faithful adherents. This becomes even more curious when we note that all of God's spirit children were supposedly destined to become men with the possibility of progression to become gods. Lucifer was expelled for wanting the glory belonging to him rightfully in the Mormon plan! We may also note that Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden for the very same reason as Lucifer was expelled from Mormon heaven. Yes, they were disobedient, but we should note that Satan tempted Eve by telling her that she would be like God when she ate of the tree.

We should revisit Lucifer's sin (Q6). He was created to be the covering cherub. His station was in the heavenly sanctuary, in the presence of the Father. He wished to be like God, and set his sights on sitting in God's seat in the sanctuary. This ambition is identical to that of all good Mormons. And this is what is condemned by God.

As I write, I am continually amazed at the willingness of some to abandon the word of God for a false premise. Not only is the LDS approach different from conventional Christianity, when it is examined carefully, it stands totally opposite to the Bible, even though the LDS Church pays lip service to the Bible. Even more incomprehensible is the fact that the key doctrines of the Bible which are ignored are actually repeated in the BOM, "the most correct book ever written" (JSH, Vol. 4) and ignored there as well! Can it be that the desire of Lucifer is so powerful as to overcome the graciousness of God's forgiveness? Is there no power short of the sword of His mouth (Rev 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21) which will make them see? Must they wait until it is too late?

Man came into being when God blew the breath of life into his nostrils (Q7). There is no evidence in scripture for any "pre-existence" for man. In fact, while scripture does not explicitly address the question, it is clear that the Biblical understanding is that man came into being *de novo* at that time. Eden was the beginning. The only references which bear on the time before Eden talk of God and the hosts of heaven, none of which are men or will become men. Yet this phony "pre-existence" becomes the foundation of one of the worst LDS doctrines

When Joseph Smith founded the LDS Church, he was anti-black. He was enveloped in the controversies of the day, foremost of which was slavery. This racial bias was incorporated in the BOM as well as in the Pearl of Great Price. Because of Cain's sin, he was allegedly cursed with the mark of a black sin. This mark found its way past the flood through Ham's wife, Egyptus. (Note that Ham's wife is not identified in the Bible, and was changed when the PGP was edited.) Because of alleged sins in pre-existence, the spirits who inhabit the bodies of Negroes are cursed in eternity, and were unable to be fully saved to glorification as gods (Q8). They were blocked in their progress by being barred from the priesthood, a necessary step to glorification. Only when the civil rights movement in the US came to its peak did the LDS Prophet receive a "revelation" that any otherwise qualified male would be admitted to the priesthood without regard to skin color. One has to wonder how correct the doctrine was from the beginning. After all, in the early church, martyrs went to their deaths without protest rather than to give up the truth. God promised persecution rather than prosperity, but the LDS Church has made changes to "eternal truths" rather than fight for them.

Contrast the exclusion of Blacks with the Biblical teaching. Salvation is a free gift. No offices are required. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, bond or free. In other words, all are alike in God's eyes. Belief is the criterion for salvation. This beautiful message knows no boundaries. While the message did not specifically mention Blacks because the NT was written largely to a Greek speaking European and Asian population, we find Philip baptizing a Black Ethiopian. Can there be any mistake about the fact that the gospel goes to all without distinction?

In LDS doctrine, we find conflicting teaching about Adam. Brigham Young, who succeeded Joseph Smith as Prophet of the Church, clearly taught that the Biblical teaching of the creation of Adam was false. He went on to declare that without question, Adam was in fact God the Father (Q9). Later LDS teaching has hedged this position slightly by calling Adam the "Ancient of Days" and "Michael", while holding short of calling him God. While it is clear that Adam was the first human and not God, LDS doctrine is that he is God. Eve (Q10) was the first woman, formed from Adam's rib. Like Adam, she had no existence prior to this. Since these facts are explicit in scripture, and Brigham Young made it clear that the Bible's account of the creation of man is false, we have no choice but to hold that Article of Faith #8 (Q11) is false. The LDS Church DOES NOT believe that the Bible is the word of God. All of their protestations to the contrary are simply a smokescreen.

The final issue in this session is the fall itself. We must first note that in the LDS scheme of things, the fall was a good thing (Q12). Let us emphasize this using their own language. Adam and Eve "fell upward". This was something that they "had to do". It was according to the "foreordained plan". How can a perfect God who is not willing that one should be lost condemn some of mankind to death before they sinned? In fact, this is what these statements say! The LDS god required that man sin! In fact, this first sin is declared to be such a good thing that without it, Adam and Eve could not know joy, and could not advance to godhood. It is nearly impossible to adequately express how bizarre this concept is. The Bible screams out in protest to this idea. God is perfectly sinless from everlasting to everlasting. It was His will that we obey forever and live in His presence without the evils that sin brings. Yet the LDS Church not only

accepts evil, it declares it to be good!

It is worth noting that the command not to eat of the tree was given to Adam before Eve was created (Q13). If we accept the LDS doctrine of Adam's identity, then God gave Himself the command! Further, God disobeyed His own command, becoming a sinner. What a horrible thought! The sinless Almighty God is actually the origin of sin. The perversity of this cannot be fathomed. God Himself forced mankind into sin, both by plan and by execution. This makes God the author of evil. If we are kind and accept the idea that Satan is the author of sin, but that Adam/God fell, this makes God unable to resist Satan. The Great Controversy is over before it begins! Not only is God not able to put an end to sin at the end of time, he cannot even triumph over sin in the beginning. Such a god is of no help to the sinner. He is powerless against the enemy, and unable to provide a sinless sacrifice to purify us from sin. If the LDS god is true, all is lost.

It does not matter whether one "falls up" or down. Sin is transgression of the law (Q14). The law was given to Adam in the Garden, and he disobeyed. That is sin, and the rest is irrelevant. The final LDS attempt to subvert this principle is to say that this sin was the only route to joy (Q15) for Adam and Eve. A more perverted concept is difficult to find. Modern people who wish to avoid the need to obey God calmly claim that sin leads to happiness. Yet the true answer is that it is God's presence, in person or in the person of the Holy Spirit that leads to joy. No other source of true joy is possible. If this were not true, it would not have been necessary to place an angel at the gate to the Garden. Adam and Eve would have joyfully walked out. All other claims to joy are hollow.

The twisted nature of LDS theology comes from the fact that it is an invention of man. No man can hope to begin to approach the goodness and holiness of God. Every such attempt, however sophisticated, will fall short of the wondrous beauty of God and His gospel. Our prayer must be that Mormons can see this.