

## **A Summary of Mormonism**

Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was born in Sharon, VT in 1805, and grew up there and in the Palmyra/Manchester area of New York. He followed in his father's footsteps and searched for buried treasure by using a magical "seer stone" found in a well. This activity got him in trouble with the law, and he paid a misdemeanor fine for it in 1826. The magical stories associated with this activity stood him in good stead a year later when, desirous of publishing a book about the origins of man in the new world, he found a sponsor by spinning a tale of angels and golden Bibles.

He published the Book of Mormon in 1830, and founded his church. As his membership grew, he found he needed to deal with various problems, and used "revelations" to solve many of these difficulties. The church relied on him as its prophet, and true to that calling, he vigorously prophesied. His charisma carried the day whenever his prophecies failed. The church moved to Kirtland, Ohio, then later to Nauvoo, Illinois. As Smith got further from his roots, the story of his "discovery" of the BOM changed and grew. Eventually the "First Vision" was recorded as involving God the Father and the Son, and occurred in Manchester in 1820, fully two years before Smith ever set foot there. Perhaps he felt that distance would prevent the discovery of the truth.

Smith made a poor decision when he incorporated racism into Mormon theology. This sat badly with the neighbors of the LDS Church. When the early church became involved in setting up phony banks and Joseph Smith began sleeping with many women, animosity grew. Frontier "justice" led to persecution. The church moved to Missouri and set up "Zion" near Independence. Again the neighbors drove the Mormons out. The frenzy reached a peak in 1844, when Smith was arrested in Illinois on trumped up charges. He was killed by a lynch mob while in jail, but took two of the mob with him by using a pistol smuggled into the jail. In 1845 the Mormons traveled west and settled the Salt Lake City, Utah area.

Mormon theology was originally quite similar to conventional Christianity. However, Smith was not a very good Bible scholar, and made errors which crept into the BOM. Later, as the church became reviled, his theology went further and further from that of those who rejected him. Eventually, by completely redefining many words, the LDS Church has been able to repaint itself as Christian, even though its theology is totally pagan polytheism.

The key doctrine of Mormonism is Progression. It is summed up in Lorenzo Snow's couplet:

As man now is, our God once was;

As now God is, so man may be, -

In other words, God is an exalted man. He lived on another earth, sinned, and died.

1. Is God a man? Did he have any need of redemption? (Num 23:19, 1 Sam 15:29)
2. In LDS theology, God was redeemed, resurrected, and progressed in knowledge to become a god. He now has sex with his eternal wives, who have spirit babies. These now inhabit the bodies of humans, who repeat the cycle. This continual progression of children is referred to as "eternal increase". Without "celestial marriage", sealed in the temple, this is not possible. Is there any indication of procreation in heaven? (Matt 22:23-33, Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-38)
3. The LDS Jesus was the first-born spirit baby of god the Father. Lucifer was his brother. God the Father had physical sex with Mary to create the baby that Jesus inhabited. What is the Biblical (and BOM) doctrine of the conception of Jesus? (Matt 1:18, Luke 1:35) What is the true nature of Lucifer? (Ezek 28:11-19)
4. The LDS Jesus was married, and sealed to his wife. Now he is progressing to become a god with his own universe. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross redeems every one, not just those who believe. Only the most horribly wicked will be destroyed with Lucifer and his angels. Even Josef Stalin and Adolph Hitler have been baptized in the temple by proxy and are expected to be in the celestial kingdom. Who will be saved

according to the Bible? (John 3:16) Who will be lost? (Rev 20:12-15)

5. Is there anything that the living can do to affect the future of the dead? (Eccl 9:6)

It is difficult to imagine a more anthropomorphic god than the LDS god. Everyone is saved! He was once a sinner like us, so we can achieve anything. By making God into a man, He ceases to be an absolute standard. No longer are we obligated to observe the perfect law. Yes there are laws, but they are very human laws. Unfortunately, such a human god is perpetually human and powerless. This becomes apparent in one way by the fact that our own works are required to seal the deal. And if we sin too badly, only our own blood can finish the redemption.

6. Is there anything that we can do to atone for our sins? (Rom 3:20, 28) Whose blood gives redemption? (Heb 9:24-26)

This is God in man's image. When we were created, it was in God's image. Then, after the fall, our ability to reflect God was distorted. When man now remakes God in man's image, this false God is a distorted vision of our polluted estate. And this god can never eliminate sin. The continual cycle of man becoming God begetting man, etc. has a constant presence of sin.

7. What is the true future of sin? (Rom 3:23, Rev 1:18, 20:14)

8. There are an infinity of gods in the LDS view. What does God say about this? (Is 43:10)

9. What is the key feature of LDS theology that allows them to ignore the teachings of the Bible? What does God say about this? (Deut 13:1-3)

#### Summary:

There is much about LDS theology which could be studied, but which adds little to the understanding of their doctrines. The key issues are as follows:

1. Progressive revelation is allowed to change truth.
2. The Bible is denied status as the forever true word of God
3. God has been redefined as a man.
4. The life cycle of man has been transported into the celestial realm.
5. The cross saves everyone, not just believers.
6. Your level of reward in the hereafter depends on your good works here, not on the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Miscellaneous issues such as the LDS Priesthood and false prophecies of Joseph Smith add nothing to the core issues. The priesthood is window dressing on false doctrines. The false prophecies add more proof to what we have already shown about Joseph Smith. He was a liar and a fraud. He is accepted by Mormons because of a failure to hold to the word of God. Progressive revelation cuts the Mormon free from the anchor of truth, and sets him adrift in a tossing sea of doctrines of convenience.

The temple services are drawn primarily from secret Masonic rites. Joseph Smith became a Mason while in Nauvoo, Illinois, and rapidly rose to the highest level. He was infatuated with the rites, and incorporated them into his religion. Once again, these are peripheral matters which have no bearing on the gospel.

The absolute core of the matter is Jesus Christ. Who is He? The Bible tells us who He is, and what He requires of us. Joseph Smith found that the true Jesus did not suit his purposes, so he invented a Jesus who did. Over time, Smith's ambitions changed, and so did his theology. His church now worships a god who bears no resemblance to the God of the Bible. This god, even if he existed, would be powerless

to end sin. When sinners on one world die, they are all promoted to paradise, and some are promoted to a position where they will create new worlds full of sin. The horror of this should be absolutely terrifying. We will never be free of the curse.

Contrast this with the one true God of the Bible. He created perfect people with free will. They sinned by choice, and God provided a way of escape for all who would accept it. When all have made their choices, God will save all who have chosen Him. The others will be destroyed. This is not done because God prefers to destroy, but because sin cannot be allowed to persist. All who have chosen salvation will have made an irrevocable choice. There will be no sin, not because it is not possible, but because no one who has sinned will do so again, and the unfallen worlds have seen the horror of sin in our example. Sin will be extinguished permanently.

Salvation is only possible by belief in the true God and the true cross. Belief in an invention of man cannot save. We must try to show our Mormon brothers the glories of the cross first, and then show them how their pale imitation leads to destruction. We do not do this because we hate them. A hatred for them would allow them to proceed to condemnation without intervention. We show them the truth because we have learned to be like Christ, and cannot allow one to be lost (2 Peter 3:9). We can do no less.