

WITNESSING EFFECTIVELY TO LATTER DAY SAINTS (LDS)
(aka PROFESSED MORMONS): PART 3
Equipping Hour at Saving Grace Bible Church, Osprey, FL; 7/30/2017

INTRODUCTION

For the last two weeks we have been discussing material on the LDS Church's teachings and doctrines so you may witness more effectively and prayerfully to professed Mormons.

PURPOSE

To compare LDS Church doctrines with the Bible so you may minister truth to professed by comparing LDS doctrinal issues with Bible truth. You need to be informed on the LDS church's main doctrinal issues in order to reach out to professed Mormons who are being deceived. Also, to strengthen your knowledge and deepen your understanding of the Word of God.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO PREPARE TO WITNESS TO PROFESSED LDS

Ankerberg, John, and Weldon, John. Behind the Mask of Mormonism: From Its Early Schemes to Its Modern Deceptions. 2nd ed. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1992.

_____. Jesus Christ/Joseph Smith. Tooele, UT: Good New for LDS, n.d.

[Note: A free copy of this book and DVD (based on the book) may be obtained by visiting www.goodnewsforlds.org or info@goodnewsforlds.org]

INTERESTING FACTS ASSOCIATED WITH LIVING IN UTAH

1. Pioneer Day.

- July 24th of each year is the much celebrated Pioneer Day; an official State of UT holiday) to celebrate the settlement of Mormons in Utah.
- It commemorates the entry of Brigham Young and the first group of Mormon pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847, where the LDS settled after travelling west from Nauvoo, IL, and other locations in the eastern U.S.
- Parades, fireworks, rodeos, and other festivities help commemorate this joyous event for professed Mormons. Similar to July 4 (Independence Day), many local and all State-run government offices as well as many privately-owned businesses are closed on Pioneer Day.
- In addition to being an official holiday in Utah, Pioneer Day is considered a special occasion by many LDS Church members. Consequently, it has been criticized for its lack of inclusiveness for non-Mormons (i.e., Gentiles). (Note: Floats and costumes of Brigham Young, Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon; replicas of pioneer wagon carts; singing the Utah official State song, "Utah, This is the Place" all parade the streets of Salt Lake City, UT, each July 24.)
- While the State holiday has very strong links to the LDS Church, the State of UT maintains that it is a celebration for everyone, regardless of faith and nationality, who emigrated to the Salt Lake Valley during the pioneer era; generally considered to have ended with the May 10, 1869 arrival of the transcontinental railroad. Where did that occur? It is at the Golden Spike U.S. National Historical Site at Promontory Point, UT (Box Elder County).
- Is there a separation of church and State in UT? Not really, although in reality only one church is recognized. Example: In 2000, the Larry H. Miller Group heavily influenced the UT State Legislature to pass legislation banning all vehicle sales on Sundays. Why? The LHM Group owned and operated many car dealerships, which were closed on Sundays. Mr. Miller and his family were practicing members of the LDS church and always closed their dealerships on Sundays.

2. Stories Associated with our Family's Adventures in UT

- Our middle son participated in Clogging (with the Starz Unlimited Competition Team) at Lagoon Amusement Park, Farmington, UT; he did not fold his arms when praying in public with his team of predominately LDS church members; he folded his hands during prayer to make a statement.

REVIEW

Highlights from Part 2 (last week) include:

(i) LDS Church Teaching on the Doctrine of God (i.e., Godhead, God the Father)

- "God himself was one as we are now, and is an exalted man...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...He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth." Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 305.

THE BIBLE: God was never a man. He created man! God has been God from all eternity to all eternity. (Psalm 41:13, 90:2, 102:25-27; Romans 1:22-23)

(ii) LDS Church Doctrine Regarding the Person of Jesus Christ (especially His birth)

- A Question Asked Last Week: Who are the Parents of Jesus Christ? In Other Words, Is There a Mrs. God?

LDS Church Teaching:

"In the heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods, each of whom has his own wife or wives, which were given to him ...while yet in his mortal state." Orson Pratt (Apostle), *The Seer*, p. 37.

"This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in all plainness by the First Presidency of the Church." Bruce R. McConkie (Apostle), *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516.

THE BIBLE: Absolutely no mention of any "wives" of God! (Matthew 22:29-30)

- A Related Question: What Does the LDS Church Teach About the Virgin Birth?

In his controversial Adam-God discourse of April 9, 1852, Brigham Young taught that the body of Jesus Christ was the product of sexual intercourse between God (Adam) and Mary, who then subsequently married Joseph. But since God (Adam) was also the literal, physical Father of Mary (Mary being his literal spirit offspring through celestial intercourse), this amounts to an incestuous and adulterous relationship, for at the same time she was betrothed in marriage to Joseph. Thus Mary had sexual relations with both her Father in heaven (God Himself) and her spirit brother, Joseph. One apparent effect of this teaching, at least in the minds of some, was to give divine sanction to "spiritual" adultery and even incest, and thus to render the incidents of incestuous polygamy and adultery in Mormon history more acceptable. "After all," they could have reasoned, "God Himself engaged in such practices." (Ankerberg, Behind the Mask of Mormonism, ch. 29.)

This Mormon teaching denies that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and it maintains that Jesus was the literal offspring of the Father because, according to Mormon theology, the Holy Ghost does not have a physical body and therefore could not have had sexual intercourse with Mary. Mormon theology teaches that the Father has a physical body, one "of flesh and bones," so He could easily have had physical sex with Mary to conceive the body of Jesus. Thus, the role of the Holy Spirit in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, so clearly stated in Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:35, is rejected by Mormons.

The following “inspired” statements by Brigham Young make this clear:

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and Sinner! When our Father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a *celestial body*, and brought Eve, *one of his wives*, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, *the archangel*, THE ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken—he *is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do*. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later.... When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family [Adam]; and when he took a tabernacle [body], it was begotten by *his Father* in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

Now remember from this time forth, and forever that *Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost....*

“If the son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties.”

In his *Doctrines of Salvation*, the tenth Mormon president and prophet, Joseph Fielding Smith, taught, “Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man and *that Man was God!*” The late LDS theologian Bruce McConkie declared, “Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father *in the same way* that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers.” The former president and prophet of the Mormon church, Ezra Taft Benson, also believes that Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Ghost:

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. Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nor was he begotten by the Holy Ghost. He is the son of the Eternal Father.

Such teachings are even remotely biblical (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:31-35), as they parallel occult and pagan teachings. Dr. Anthony Hoekema appropriately concludes:

What these men are saying is that, according to Mormon theology, the body of Jesus Christ was a product of the physical union of God the father and the virgin Mary. One shudders to think of the revolting implications of this view, which brings into what is supposed to be “Christian” theology one of the most unsavory features of ancient pagan mythology!

“Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers...Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father.” McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 547, 742.

THE BIBLE: Jesus was begotten by the Holy Ghost. Mary was indeed a virgin right up to the Lord's birth (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:35).

A summary:

| Mormon Christ and Christian Christ Incompatibility | |
|--|---|
| The Mormon Jesus Christ | The Biblical Jesus Christ |
| A created being; the elder brother of Lucifer | Uncreated God; Eternal God |
| Common (one of many gods) and, in some ways, of minor importance in the <i>larger</i> Mormon cosmology | Unique (the Second Person of the one and only Godhead) and of supreme importance throughout time, eternity and all creation |
| Conceived by a physical sex act between God the Father (Adam or Elohim) and Mary, thus not through a true virgin birth | Conceived by the Holy Spirit, who supernaturally “overshadowed” Mary, this a true virgin birth |
| Once sinful and imperfect | Eternally sinless and perfect |
| Earned his own salvation (exaltation, godhood) | As God, never required salvation |
| A married polygamist? | An unmarried monogamist |

(iii) LDS Church Doctrine Regarding the Holy Ghost

According to the LDS Church, all heavenly spirits other than the Father and his celestial wife (our “heavenly mother”), including Jesus, are their spirit sons and daughters. This doctrinal view has led some Mormons naturally to the conclusion that the Holy Ghost is another of God’s spirit sons. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the Holy Ghost is a spirit man, a spirit son of God the Father” (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 6:249). In other words, according to some Mormons, the Holy Ghost is one of our spirit brothers in heaven—one who somehow became part of the Godhead. LDS leaders have officially neither endorsed nor denied this idea, and LDS theologians who advocate it have no explanation for how this might have happened.

What does the Bible teach about the Holy Spirit?

The notion that the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit) is one of God’s many spirit sons or some other deity separate from God himself not only has no support whatsoever in the Bible, it is inconsistent with what the Bible teaches. The Holy Spirit is one God with the Father and the Son, so that the Bible calls him the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son (Jesus Christ). This inseparable relationship between the Holy Spirit and the other two divine persons implies that as “the eternal Spirit” (Hebrews 9:14) He has always been this divine Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not a spiritual being who somehow advanced to the status of a member of the Godhead, but rather He is and always has been the Lord God (Acts 5:3-4, 9; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18). By the grace of God in redemption, believers are adopted to become “brothers” to God’s one and only divine Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11-18). This means that we were not and are not brothers of the Holy Spirit; nor are we heavenly beings that the Holy Ghost helps to reach

their divine potential. Rather, it is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we physical creatures are able to call God our Father (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-6).

Q: How to Discuss These LDS Church Doctrines with Professed Mormons

- Engage them in a discussion and always ask them questions since they enjoy discussing their LDS church beliefs. Ask questions and avoid debating.

- Here is an example:

Me: "I understand that the LDS Church teaches that 'as man is God once was and as God is man can become.'" Is my understanding correct with respect to that doctrine or am I confused?

Professed Mormon person: Yes, that is correct.

Me: "Do you know who initiated that teaching?"

Professed Mormon person: Sure! Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.

Me: "Let's open a KJV Bible to meet the original author of that teaching. Turn to Genesis 3:1-7." (This will enlighten them that the serpent is the originator of such a doctrine, which is where Joseph Smith and Brigham Young based their doctrine.)

TODAY'S LESSON OUTLINE: JULY 30, 2017

Explore the Following Topics:

- (i) The LDS Church's Teaching on the Doctrine of Man
- (ii) The LDS Church's Teaching on Original Sin/the Atonement/Justification by Faith
- (iii) The LDS Church's Teaching on Man's Pre-Mortal Existence as "Spirit Children"
- (iv) Explore/Answer Key Questions Regarding the LDS Church

THE LESSON

(i) The LDS Church's Teaching on the Doctrine of Man

LDS Church doctrine teaches that Adam's fall was a 'fall upward' and it was not sinful. The LDS Church maintains that Adam's sin was necessary for the propagation of the human race. For example, Mormon scriptures state:

- "Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy" (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 2:25).
- "And in that day Adam blessed God...saying...for because of my transgression my eyes are opened and in this life I shall have joy" (Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses 5:10-11).

Further, LDS Church writers explain:

- Adam's sin was "a necessary step in the plan of life and a **great blessing** to all mankind" (*Gospel Principles*, p.31).
- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "The fall of Adam came as a **blessing in disguise**...nor do I accuse Adam of a sin...it is not always a sin to transgress a law...we can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits as being a sin" (Doctrines of Salvation 1:114-115).
- "Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction. He fell toward the goal...Adam fell, but **he fell upward**" (Deseret News, p.7, July 31, 1965). (Note: Deseret News is a daily newspaper owned/operated by the LDS Church.)

- John A. Widtsoe stated: "Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden "became a **necessary and honorable act** in carrying out the plan of the Almighty" (Joseph Smith---Seeker After Truth, p.160).

Is this Mormon teaching inconsequentially different from Paul the Apostle's exposition in Romans 5:12-21? The LDS Church says No!

- "Mormonism rejects the notion that man's condition is best described by 'depravity'. Nowhere within Mormon theology is its optimism concerning man's natural condition more apparent than in this denial of the Christian doctrine of original sin" (Owen Kendall White, Jr., *The Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy*, p.101-104, University of Utah thesis, June 1967).
- While the LDS Church that the transgression of Adam and Eve brought death into the world and made all mortals subject to temptation, suffering, and weakness, it denies that any culpability is automatically transmitted to Adam and Eve's offspring. All mortals commit sin, but they will be punished "for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (*Articles of Faith*, #2).

What Does the Bible teach? Adam's sin caused spiritual and physical death for all (unregenerated) mankind:

- Read Romans 3:9-19
- "Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and **death through sin**, and so **death spread to all men**, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).
- "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] the **many died**" (Romans 5:15).
- "for on the one hand [Adam] the **judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation**" (Romans 5:16).
- "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], **death reigned** through the one [Adam]" (Romans 5:17).
- "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men" (Romans 5:18).
- "For as **through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners**" (Romans 5:19).

Man has been punished because he thought he could make himself to be like God: Read: Ezekiel 28:1-10:

- "Yet you are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God" (Ezekiel 28:2).
- "Because you have made your heart Like the heart of God...I will bring strangers upon you...They will bring you down to the pit" (Ezekiel 28:6-8).
- "Will you still say, 'I am a god', ...Though you are a man and not God" (Ezekiel 28:9).

Man's sin was not the result of the God tempting Adam:

- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and **He Himself does not tempt anyone**. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives

birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (James 1:13-15).

- "Then to Adam He [God] said... '**Cursed** is the ground because of you; In **toil** you will eat of it all the days of your life...By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground...For you are dust, And **to dust you shall return**" (Genesis 3:17-19).
- While Adam was responsible for his sin against God, God redeemed His elect/chosen ones out of it: "The gift [salvation] is not like that which came through the one [Adam] who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification " (Romans 5:16).

(ii) The LDS Church's Teaching on Original Sin/the Atonement/ Justification by Faith

The LDS Church does not view the atonement of Christ in the biblical and historical Christian manner. Instead of the atonement occurring on the cross, the LDS Church teaches that the atonement occurred primarily in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus shed His blood. Please read the following quotes from a BYU professor (Matthews) and the Mormon apostle (McConkie):

- BYU professor Robert J. Matthews, who on page 282 of his book, *A Bible! A Bible!*, wrote, "It was in Gethsemane, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, that Jesus made his perfect atonement by the shedding of his blood--more so than on the cross."
- Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie, stated, "Where and under what circumstances was the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God made? Was it on the Cross of Calvary or in the Garden of Gethsemane? It is to the Cross of Christ that most Christians look when centering their attention upon the infinite and eternal atonement. And certainly the sacrifice of our Lord was completed when he was lifted up by men; also, that part of his life and suffering is more dramatic and, perhaps, more soul stirring. **But in reality the pain and suffering, the triumph and grandeur, of the atonement took place primarily in Gethsemane,**" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 774, emphasis mine).

What Does the Bible Say?

There is no biblical record of Jesus atoning for man's sins in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Garden is where He suffered greatly in prayer because He did not want to go through the coming ordeal of His beating and crucifixion. The agony of the Garden was so intense for Him that He apparently sweat blood (Luke 22:44). But, the only references in the Bible dealing with Christ and the atonement are in reference to the cross--not the Garden of Gethsemane.

1. Reconciliation is through the cross:

A) "And might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." (Ephesians 2:16).

B) "And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." (Colossians 1:20).

2. Our debt nailed to the cross

"Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." (Colossians 2:14).

3. He bore our sins on the cross

"And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24).

4. Reconciled through Christ's death--which occurred on the cross.

A) "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10).

B) "Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--," (Colossians 1:22).

Paul wrote, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2). He does not mention anything, ever, about Jesus bearing our sins in the Garden. He only mentions sins in relation to the cross of Christ. Wherein did God purchase the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28)? It was at the cross where the debt was paid -- not in the Garden.

Propitiation

A propitiation is a sacrifice that turns away wrath. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was just such a propitiation. It was on the cross where Jesus bore our sins (1 Peter 2:24) where he became a propitiation, the sacrifice for our sins. Notice that the sacrifice on the cross is a public event, and it is this public display where propitiation occurred: "whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith." (Romans 3:25). When Jesus sweat drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, that was not a public display. Therefore, the sacrifice of redemption, where Jesus bore our sins as the propitiation, did not occur in the Garden of Gethsemane but in the public display of the cross. Thus, when we see the term *propitiation* referred to in Scripture, we know it is referring to the sacrifice on the cross. Let's take a look at more Scriptures dealing with this:

- "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17).
- "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2).
- "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10).

Notice that Jesus, the high priest, was the propitiation for our sins. This means that He bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24) as a publicly displayed sacrifice (Romans 3:25) by which we are cleansed from our sins (1 John 1:7). It is not the blood that He sweat in the Garden that cleanses us of our sins but the blood that was shed in the public display of the propitiatory sacrifice on the cross that cleanses us. This is why the scripture says, "and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." (Ephesians 2:16).

(iii) The LDS Church's Teaching on Man's Pre-Mortal Existence as "Spirit Children"

1. The LDS church teaches that man was a pre-existent spirit and that mankind is of the same species as God. Our origin is supposed to have been as procreated children of God, born as spirits in some other realm. In that spirit world existence we progressed as far as was possible, but to become truly like our Heavenly Father we needed to obtain physical bodies. We also needed to learn the difference between good and evil. Since our Heavenly Father has progressed so far that He cannot allow evil into His presence, it was necessary for us to leave Him for some place where we could encounter and overcome evil ourselves:

- "The mind of man is as immortal as God Himself...**God never did have the power to create the spirit of man at all**" (Times and Seasons 5:615 and *History of the Church* 6:310-311).
- "We were **first begotten as spirit children in heaven** and then born naturally on earth" (*Journal of Discourses*, 4:218).
- "**Before coming to this earth, all humans were begotten** by our heavenly parents and were born with spirit bodies" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 428, 516-17).
- "all had a **previous existence**, thousands of years ago, in the heavens, in the presence of God" (*Journal of Discourses* 1:62).

So, according to Mormon teaching, this world was prepared as a school, where we have been sent to obtain physical bodies and to learn the lessons of mortality:

- President Spencer W. Kimball stated: "We would be expected to gain knowledge, educate ourselves, train ourselves. We were to control our urges and desires, master and control our passions, and overcome our weaknesses, small and large. We were to eliminate sins of omission and of commission, and to follow the laws and commandments given us by our Father" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 5).

According to Mormon teaching, two of man's older brothers, Jesus and his spirit brother Lucifer, both wanted to be savior. When Jesus was chosen, Lucifer rebelled and convinced one third of the spirit brothers to fight with him and revolt. **All pre-mortal humans participated in this war**. Those who fought on the side of Lucifer became the demons. Those who fought most valiantly on the side of Jesus and Elohim were born in Mormon families.

Milton R. Hunter summarized this doctrine by stating that "we are as eternal as God Himself. But to achieve perfection and godhood, we must go through at least four stages of life: **In the first stage each of us were conscious eternally existing beings called 'intelligences'**. In that realm, we experienced good and evil, love and hate, free agency and so on until we had completed our work there" (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, pp. 126-129).

What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible clearly teaches that God created Adam, the first man, and all other men after him. This is in direct contrast with the Mormon teaching that man had a pre-existent life before being put on this earth.

- "And **God created man** in His own image, in the image of God **He created him**; male and female **He created them**" (Genesis 1:27).
- "Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and **forms the spirit of man within him**" (Zechariah. 12:1).

- "Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, **who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it**" (Isaiah 42:5).
- "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).
- "But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and **all of us are the work of Your hand**" (Isaiah 64:8).
- "Where were you [man] when I [God] laid the foundation of the earth?" (Job 38:4).
- One verse commonly used by Mormon missionaries is Jeremiah. 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you..." But this verse is not talking about pre-existence. It is talking about God's ordination and appointment of Jeremiah to be a prophet to his nation. Look at the whole verse: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and **before you were born I consecrated you**; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."
- How could Jesus say this if the people he addressed were pre-existent with Him? "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And I will declare to them, '**I never knew you**; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:21-23).
- 1 Corinthians 15:46-50 states, "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. **The first man is from the earth**, earthy; the second man is from heaven". He mentions the nature of man in the proper order: natural then spiritual. Paul continues on, "As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

The LDS Church doctrine about pre-existent spirits is linked to their teaching about eternal progression. Their position is as follows:

- 1) Jesus was eternally existent as a spirit being; 2) Jesus progressed from a man to become a god;
- 3) therefore, man must also be eternally existent if he can progress to become a god.

(Note: Many references on the LDS Church's teaching are from Mormon publications, such as *Mormon Doctrine*, *Articles of Faith*, *Doctrines of Salvation*, *History of the Church*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and so forth. Other references are cited from the Book of Mormon (e.g., I Nephi, II Nephi, and Alma.)

Explore/Answer A Key Question:

(1) "How Did Mormons/LDS get involved with genealogy?"

Answer: Many do not know that one of the biggest influences in the recent genealogy craze is the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS. The LDS interest in genealogies is connected to their belief in and practice of "baptism for the dead."

The LDS church believes that several ordinances, including baptism, must be fulfilled for a person to be saved (Doctrine and Covenants 84:19-21). The LDS church also teaches that members in good standing can fulfill these ordinances in the place of ancestors who have passed on without the opportunity to do so (Doctrine & Covenants 124:93). The church says that, once the ordinances are fulfilled and the person accepts the gospel of Jesus Christ (even if heard and accepted after death), he or she can move on to a higher kingdom (*Doctrine and Covenants* 76). LDS members use genealogy to discover who their ancestors are and fulfill the covenants in their stead.

These beliefs are faulty in several ways. First, there is only one way to salvation, and that is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ordinances and sacraments are works, and therefore, not required (Ephesians 2:8-9). Second, no person can earn the salvation of another. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of

Christ" (Romans 10:17). It does not come by someone else being baptized or completing ordinances in your name.

There is nothing wrong with studying genealogies. Jesus' ancestry is given in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. But once a person has passed on, his chance to come to a saving relationship with Christ is over.

(2) Why Does the LDS Church Build Temples?

Answer: The LDS Church claims that LDS temples are rituals for both the living and the dead. Unlike Protestant chapels where members meet on a weekly basis, Mormon temples are special buildings in which various rites necessary for exaltation (to godhood) are performed. The ritual most often performed is baptism for the dead, whereby a living substitute is baptized on behalf of a deceased person. Joseph Smith (First LDS President) claimed: "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has placed upon us is to seek after our dead." Members who neglect this do so at the peril of their own salvation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 193, 356).

LDS temples are also used for marriage ceremonies binding husbands and wives together not only for time, but also for eternity. "Sealing" ceremonies are performed to unite children with their parents for eternity.

(Note: Mormons are also compelled to promise that they will not speak of what they have learned in the temple "endowment ceremony," even to other Mormons. In the endowment, participants are taught special handshakes (called tokens), arm gestures (signs), and special phrases (key words). Brigham Young taught that after a Mormon departs this life, knowledge of tokens, signs, and key words will be necessary in order to pass the angelic sentinels who guard the way back to the presence of God (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 416). Visitation of the dead in LDS temples are regarded as a positive experience by many Mormons (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 19, p. 229). Few Mormons realize that the "ancient" endowment ritual has undergone many significant changes since 1845, the most recent in 2005.

What Does the Bible Teach?

What was the primary function of the OT Temple in ancient Israel? Sacrifices of animals – not sealings. Animal sacrifices have never been a part of an LDS temple ritual. Temples in Israel focused on repentance and forgiveness. The people of Israel went into the temple because of their unworthiness, offering sacrifices for their sins. This is opposed to the earned "worthiness" that the LDS church believes is essential for Mormon temple participation. Furthermore, the Bible does not mention any marriage performed in the temple, let alone baptisms for the dead. (Note: The Apostle Paul's comment about baptism for the dead in I Corinthians 15:29 refers to it as something "they" – those who were denying the resurrection – do, not something Christians do.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:21-24 that temple worship would one day cease. Because Christians as a whole represent the "temple of God" (I Corinthians 3:16), and because Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice, temple worship is no longer necessary.

(3) Does the LDS Church Teach that Jesus was Married?

Answer: The LDS Church teaches: "Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana of Galilee. We say it was Jesus Christ who was married...whereby he could see his seed." (Orson Hyde, Apostle, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 82.)

What Does the Bible Teach? Absolutely not when one reads John 2:1-12. This (false) LDS doctrine is generally not taught openly today among professed Mormons. However, since marriage in a LDS temple is

mandatory to progress to become a god in Mormonism, to fit the theology of Mormonism the LDS Church's "Jesus" has to be married. Otherwise, He would only be a ministering servant to those in Mormonism's heaven who have celestial marriage."