

Gospels that Damn: Mormonism

By Grayson Stewart Gilbert

1. Introduction

- a. It is important to know that the founder, Joseph Smith, is ultimately the foundation of the Mormon church.
 - i. The reason for this is simple: everything in Mormonism starts and ends with a series of mystical revelations that Joseph Smith claimed he had.
 1. Smith himself claimed that the pure form of the Christian faith was lost just after the apostles died, and everything since this is an apostate Christianity.
 2. True Christianity was subsequently rediscovered when Smith started having his encounters with god. Therefore, no Joseph Smith, no revelation from god, and no pure form of the Christian faith.
 - ii. For the LDS church, they hold that four works are authoritative revelation from god, but one of those works, the King James Bible, holds an incredibly important asterisk.
 1. According to Article of Faith number 8, the King James Bible is the Word of God—inasmuch as it is translated accurately.
 2. The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, and The Doctrines and the Covenants, are the lens through which the Bible is filtered.
- b. At the heart of Mormonism is a concept called the Eternal Law of Progression, which is the underlying theology at work in the religion.
 - i. “There is no such thing as principle, power, wisdom, knowledge, life, position, or anything that can be imagined, that remains stationary—they must increase or decrease” (Brigham Young).

- ii. So, what exactly does that mean? In short, everything is about continual progress in a state of never-ending change.
 - 1. Every single person that has ever existed, was never actually created, but is an eternal being.
 - 2. “Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29).
 - a. This concept teaches that God and man are of the same essence, and merely at different points in this eternal law of progression.
 - b. There are an infinite number of gods and worlds that have been prior to this one, and there are an infinite number of worlds and gods that will be after this world ends.

2. Concept of God in Mormonism

- a. Mormon doctrine teaches that God the Father, who they call Elohim, was once a man just like you and I are today.
 - i. Elohim went through the eternal law of progression on another planet well before our world was created.
 - 1. What this means is that at some point, Elohim was conceived by his own set of spirit parents, and then was born into another world by biological parents.
 - 2. Elohim was a faithful Mormon on a different planet, and when he was resurrected, he attained to the status of a god, inherited his own world, and began to produce spirit children with his many wives.
 - ii. The first of all their spirit children was Jehovah, who is Jesus Christ, and this is what made Him the firstborn, above all other spirit babies.
 - 1. One of the other spirit babies that Elohim had was named Lucifer.

2. Jehovah and Lucifer came before council to determine how the Law of Progression would play out in this world.
 - a. Lucifer loses, and is cast out of heaven with the 1/3 of the spirit children who sided with him, and they become Satan and the demons.
 - b. Elohim and Jehovah begin to enact their plan by then placing the first spirit children on earth, known as Adam and Eve, where they would be tested.
 - c. What this origin story tells us are several important things about how the LDS church views God.
- b. Ultimately, the LDS church rejects any concept of God that is even remotely close to the Christian faith.
 - i. They deny that God the Father has created all things out of nothing, as the very first verse of the Bible explicitly tells us in Genesis 1:1.
 1. They teach instead that God created only this world, and He did so by organizing the chaos of pre-existing matter.
 2. They likewise teach, contrary to Colossians 1:16, that Christ is the first created being, and that under the direction of Elohim, He created all other things.
 - ii. God the Father is merely an exalted man, and thus, at one point He became God.
 1. They reject that every member of the Trinity has eternally been One God.
 2. They reject that God is separate from Creation. In fact, every last one of you, according to LDS doctrine, is of the same essence, or being, as God.
 3. When you consider all of this, you must, at face value, throw out everything you know about God from the Scriptures.

3. Mormonism's Understanding of the Problem

- a. Mormonism does teach that there is a problem that all mankind faces, but it is not like we understand it in Scripture.
 - i. Because the plan of Elohim and Jehovah was that man could become exalted gods, mortality is designed to be a period of testing.
 - 1. What that means is that there must be an opposition in all things. If this were not so, it is said that righteousness could not come to pass (2 Nephi 2:11).
 - 2. Ultimately, Adam and Eve failed this first test, but it is seen as a good thing in light of the Eternal Law of Progression.
 - ii. Infants inherit certain consequences and effects of the Fall, but there is no transfer of guilt due to the concept of Original Sin (Articles of Faith 1:2).
 - 1. The consequence of Adam's sin then is merely that infants will take on mortality, and undergo this testing like all others.
 - 2. According to LDS scripture, all children are born without any ability to sin until the age of accountability, which is eight years old.
- b. Mormonism also teaches on the reality of sin and judgment being a problem mankind faces—but again, not as the Bible defines it.
 - i. Sin, is defined as any “willful wrongdoing” or even the “willful failure to do what is right.”
 - 1. You commit sin when you knowingly and rationally go against what God commands, or fail to do what is right.
 - 2. Up until this point that you knowingly and willingly commit sin, it is merely called a “blunder.”
 - 3. While many of the things the LDS church would call sin do match up with what the Bible teaches, some sins are worse than others.

- a. The third worst sin is sexual sin, because it is not possible to restore your virtue or loss of character.
 - b. The second worst sin you can commit is murder, because you cannot restore the life you took.
 - c. The only unforgivable sin worthy of eternity in Hell is blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, which means you are an apostate from the LDS church.
- ii. This then brings us to the LDS concept of judgment, which takes place in two different forms.
- 1. The first: only those who have committed apostasy from the LDS church will find themselves in hell and damned for all eternity.
 - 2. The second, is an utterly bewildering concept where “damnation” does not refer to eternal punishment.
 - a. What “damnation” means is that you will be stopped at some earlier point in the Law of Eternal Progression, and you won’t become a god.
 - b. Instead, you’ll go to a spirit prison after you die, where you will have the chance to hear the LDS gospel, and you will be given another opportunity to believe the LDS gospel.

4. Mormonism’s Understanding of the Solution/Commands

- a. The entryway into the Mormon faith is bound up in what they call the Four Fundamentals of the Gospel.
 - i. Obedience to these four fundamentals is what you must do if you want to progress to becoming a god in the eternal law of progression.
 - 1. **Faith:** For the LDS church, through Christ’s atonement, you become justified by faith in the gospel.

- a. Justification is said to *start* the believer on the path toward righteousness.
 - b. Faith is not belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ; by faith, you simply enter the gate of repentance and baptism (2 Nephi 31:17).
 2. **Repentance:** a lifelong process of changing one's actions to conform to the will of God.
 - a. Thus, when one repents, one is securing their own salvation.
 - b. "And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism comes by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments brings remission of sins" (Moroni 8:25).
 3. **Baptism:** another work one must perform in order to be saved.
 - a. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not, and is not baptized, shall be damned" (Doctrine and Covenants 112:29).
 - b. The only baptisms that are considered valid are those performed by the priesthood in the LDS church.
 4. **Laying on of the Hands:** a rite performed by the Melchizedek priesthood in the LDS church, where the Holy Spirit is given to you.
 5. At the fundamental level , faith, repentance, baptism, and laying on of the hands, are the ways they believe Elohim forgives sin.
- ii. Yet beyond all of this, you must abide by what they call "continued obedience to gospel rules and principles."
1. In other words, even these four fundamentals of the gospel are not enough to save you.
 2. You must continue on the path of repentance and obedience all your life, because this is how you can be saved.

- a. “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, **after** all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23).
 - b. “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of **all** ungodliness; and **if** ye shall deny yourselves of **all** ungodliness, and **if** love God with all your might, mind, and strength, **then** is his grace sufficient for you...” (Moroni 10:32).
- b. Unworthy Mormons and everyone else (again, except apostate Mormons) will die and go to a place called “Spirit Prison.”
- i. People from the highest level of heaven will come down to you there and proclaim the gospel.
 1. Those in Spirit Prison will have an opportunity to undergo all four of the fundamentals of the gospel.
 2. However, if baptism and laying on of the hands is necessary for salvation and those must be done by the priests in the temple on earth, how does a spirit do that?
 - a. The first is through a rite called Baptism for the Dead. In this, your living, worthy, Mormon relatives can go to the temple and be baptized in your place.
 - b. The second rite is the laying on of hands for the dead, where again, a worthy Mormon can go to the priesthood and do this in your place.
 - ii. Essentially, what this all boils down to is a strange blend of works-salvation and a form of universalism.
 1. If you want to be saved in the sense that Mormonism teaches, you must adhere to a form of works salvation.

- a. You must not only obey all of the four fundamentals of the gospel, you must participate in many other works.
 - b. This can still be accomplished after death on your behalf, but it is dependent upon your living, worthy Mormon relatives, and the priesthood in the LDS church.
2. If you don't have Mormon relatives who can perform these rites on your behalf, you will have to wait it out in Spirit Prison until Christ's atoning work comes to full completion—but you won't become a god.
 3. The thing we must recognize about the solution in Mormonism is that every bit of it relies on something other than Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

5. Mormonism's Understanding of the Blessings

- a. Mormonism teaches that the blessings are largely found in the life to come, which are found in three different kingdoms: the Celestial Kingdom, the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Telestial Kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 76).
 - i. Despite how prominent these three degrees of paradise are in LDS doctrine, there isn't much teaching on what they will be like.
 - ii. Instead, Joseph Smith taught that the glories of what is to come is only revealed to those the Spirit grants visions to (like himself), and they cannot be contained in human words.
- b. The Telestial Kingdom is the lowest kingdom one can attain to, and this kingdom is reserved for the worst offenders who did not repent in this life, or in spirit prison.
 - i. It will be made up of murderers, liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and more.
 - ii. They will undergo the purification necessary during the Millennium to be prepared for the glories of the Telestial Kingdom.

1. Joseph Smith said that if you knew the glories to come in the Telestial Kingdom, you would kill yourself just to get there.
 2. However, in LDS theology, this is still a state of damnation, as you are prevented from progressing any further on the road to exaltation as a god.
- c. The Terrestrial Kingdom is the second degree of paradise, and this kingdom is reserved for those who were moral people, but were deceived by the craftiness of men.
- i. This is also made up of all those who came to believe in the Mormon gospel during their stint in Spirit Prison.
 - ii. They will have some form of a glorified body and will see Jesus Christ, but they will not be in the presence of Elohim.
- d. The Celestial Kingdom then is the highest and best kingdom of them all.
- i. This kingdom is only reserved for those faithful Mormons, who entered into the church through faith, repentance, baptism, and laying on of the hands.
 1. They continued along the “straight and narrow path,” which involved good works, chastity, tithing, and abiding by words of wisdom.
 2. If they never entered into a temple marriage, though they live in the Celestial Kingdom, they will not ultimately become a god like Elohim.
 - ii. To become God the Father of your own world, you must be a male who was consecrated into the priesthood, went through the eternal marriage ceremony in the temple, and live faithfully all your life.
 1. You will inherit your own planet with your spirit wife (or wives), and produce your own spirit children, who will then worship you as God the Father.
 2. You can only attain to the highest level of godhood if you’re a man. If you’re a woman, your duty will be to perpetually make spirit babies.

iii. And according to the eternal law of progression, this whole thing happens over and over again, for all eternity.

1. Billions upon billions of worlds where gods exist and propagate their own story arc of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.
2. The saddest part about it—ultimately, there is no real end to sin, Satan, and death in Mormonism.
 - a. Mankind will always need to be tested so they can attain to the level of a god, so sin will always be present.
 - b. Within the framework of this eternal law of progression, arguably, there will always be a tempter.
 - c. Mankind must be born in the flesh in order to progress along the path to godhood, so death is a necessary part of that equation.

6. Conclusion

Benediction: May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5-6).