

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Review

#### 1. Cults or counterfeits

##### (1) Counterfeits

- i. the gospel may be present within its confession, but has become obscured or distorted, inadvertently or otherwise, by superfluous doctrines, authorities or practices, wherein the gospel is often not central in the life of the community.
- ii. Some are saved.

##### (2) Cults

- i. the gospel is absent from its confession, while at the same time, may leverage the gospel, its language or its components, to advance its doctrines and practices.
- ii. No one is saved.

#### 2. Catholic Church

##### (1) Cult or counterfeit?

##### (2) Christians?

#### 3. Orthodoxy

##### (1) ortho (right) + doxy (doctrine)

##### (1) Doctrine = doctor = teacher

##### (2) Guide

- i. Trinity
- ii. Authority
- iii. Liberty

## II. The Church of 'Jesus Christ' and Latter Day Saints

### 1. Brigham Young

- (1) Founder of Salt Lake City and first governor of Utah
- (2) Succession Crisis in 1844
- (3) 2nd President (3 1/2 years after Smith's Death)

### 2. Joseph Smith

- (1) Not a lot of success as a merchant and a farmer
- (2) Came of age following Second Great Awakening of the Americas
- (3) Influenced by the Methodist movement
- (4) Smith said that, although he had become concerned about the welfare of his soul, he was confused by the claims of competing religious denominations
- (5) Vision of Heavenly Father and Jesus; Modern churches = turned away from the Gospel
- (6) 1844 - rift between him and closest associates
  - i. Nauvoo, IL - fight over money and women



- ii. Exposed in a local newspaper (incl. polygamy) and his views on becoming a "god".
- iii. Smith supported a movement to have the newspaper destroyed because they feared what was being reported would bring the countryside down on the Mormons
- iv. But this decision actually provoked a larger attack.
- v. After a standoff with the state and the Mormon church, who had declared martial law, Smith was finally taken into custody after he surrendered.
- vi. They were charged with treason.
- vii. Armed mob stormed the jail where he was being held and shot him while he was trying to escape out the window.

## #1 - TRINITY (THREE SEPARATE GODS)

### I. God the Father (Heavenly Father)

#### 1. Once a man

- (1) God was once a man who had a father just as we do as is a being with a physical body.
- (2) He lived on a world and was taught the principles and laws (by who?) that allowed him to advance to deity.
- (3) We are essentially the same kind of being as him.

#### 2. Formed From Eternal Essence

- (1) Joseph Smith did not believe God created the universe out of nothing (ex nihilo)
- (2) The elements are eternal and uncreated; He organized what was already there.
- (3) God is our creator, not because he formed our eternal essence, but because he created spirit beings from this essence.

#### 3. Network of Gods

- (1) Just as he was taught laws, advancing to deity, we too are given laws by God, by which we can advance toward our destiny.
- (2) The view of the universe posits a vast network of gods eternally working together to bring lesser spirits towards divine exaltation.

**JN. 4:24** | *"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

**JER. 10:6** | *"There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might."*

**ISA. 44:6** | *"Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god."*

**PSA. 90:2** | *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."*

**REV. 4:11** | *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

### II. God the Son



## 1. Jesus, Spirit Child

- (1) The spirit child of Heavenly Father.
- (2) Identified with Yahweh in the OT
- (3) He is a god, but in the same way we can all progress to a divine nature. He is just one of many sons of God.
- (4) His incarnation was the result of a physical relationship between Heavenly Father and Mary.

## 2. Lucifer, Spirit Brother of Jesus; also a god.

**RO. 9:5** | *"To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

**PHP. 2:5-7** | *"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."*

**EZE. 28:14-17** | *"On the day that you were created...You were an anointed guardian cherub...You were blameless in your ways...till unrighteousness was found in you...Your heart was proud because of your beauty...I cast you to the ground..."*

## III. God the Spirit

1. Talk with Alan Greer.

## #2 - AUTHORITY

### I. Revelation (The Four Standard Works)

#### 1. Bible

- (1) Latter-Day Saints think about truth differently than Christians.
- (2) They place a great deal of emphasis on having a spiritual experience whereby God validates the truth personally and subjectively.
- (3) The Book of Mormon teaches that only fools say the Bible is sufficient and that other scripture is not needed.

**2 Nephi 29:6** | *"Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible."*

#### 2. The Book of Mormon

- (1) Great Apostasy
  - i. the Church fell into total and complete apostasy after the death of the last apostle
- (2) 1823 an angel named Moroni
  - i. Smith was told by Moroni how he had buried gold plates fourteen centuries earlier not far from the Smith farm near Palmyra, New York. The angel said that they contained a record of ancient inhabitants and the "source from whence they sprang." Smith claimed he was prohibited from retrieving the gold record for another four years.
  - ii. The story of the gold plates is an absolutely essential part of the Mormon narrative, for in the eyes of many Latter-day Saints, the coming forth of this record, and its subsequent translation into the Book

of Mormon, legitimizes their belief that Smith was indeed a prophet sent by God to restore the true Christian faith lost long ago during the "great apostasy."

iii. The story of the gold plates cannot be underestimated, for without them there can be no Book of Mormon. Though many members of the LDS Church are very familiar with this story, the details surrounding how Smith obtained the plates, how he "translated" the plates, and how a few chosen men saw the plates, is suspect to say the least.

- (3) The Book of Mormon claims to be the ancient record which reports the spiritual history of the nations that once inhabited the Americas.
- (4) The Book of Mormon contains many linguistic similarities to the King James Bible, including entire passages duplicated word-for-word. For example, the Book of Mormon contains 19 chapters of the King

### 3. The Pearl of Great Price

- (1) Books that Mormons believe were written by Moses and Abraham, along with the official account of Joseph Smith's early prophetic work.

### 4. The Doctrine and Covenants

- (1) A Collection of modern revelations, mostly those of Joseph Smith.

## II. Administration (People)

### 1. Continual Revelation

- (1) Statements of current prophets, Church lesson manuals, official policy handbooks, magazines, etc...can all be recognized as official doctrine when presented, with the understanding that doctrine may change over time as God reveals further truths.
  - i. **Mormon Church** - "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."
- (2) Mormons believe apostolic revelation is inspired, but not infallible, and can supersede previous revelation, including that found in their scriptures.

### 2. Church is Highest Authority on Earth

- (1) The only one authorized to bring forth new doctrine is the President of the Church, who, when he does, will declare it as revelation from God, and it will be accepted the church's First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and then sustained by the body of the church.

## #3 - LIBERTY

### I. Heaven

#### 1. First Estate

- (1) Prior to creation human spirits were literal children of heavenly parents. Although their spirits were created, the essential "intelligence" of these spirits is considered eternal, and without beginning.
- (2) Second Estate
- (3) At a family council, God the Father told the spirit-children that according to his "plan of salvation" they would have to leave their heavenly home, take on human bodies, and be tested before they could progress to godhood.

- (4) Satan rejected this plan and wanted to implement one that would have involved loss of moral agency.
- (5) Jesus opposed Satan and offered an alternative plan in which he would take on human form and live a sinless life so that his spirit brothers and sisters could become gods.

(1) When Satan's plan was not accepted, he rebelled and took "the third part" of the hosts of heaven with him to the earth to serve as tempters.

## 2. Second Estate

- (1) This life
- (2) Being tested before we can progress to godhood.

## II. Salvation

### 1. Plan of Salvation

- (1) Mormons believe in a **universal salvation** for everyone from death (this is what they refer to when they speak of "salvation by grace alone."). But after the body is reunited with the spirit, humans go to different places:
  - i. **Celestial Glory** — The highest level of the celestial heavenly kingdom is for (married) Mormons who have kept all the Celestial laws and commandments (this is what they refer to by "eternal life"). The lower celestial kingdom is for single Mormons who lived a worthy life and good people (including Christians) who didn't have a chance on earth to hear about and accept Mormonism. People in this lower group cannot become gods.
  - ii. **Terrestrial Glory** — The terrestrial kingdom is for unworthy Mormons and good people who knew about Mormonism on earth but rejected it until after their death.
  - iii. **Telestial Glory** – The telestial realm is for wicked people who rejected Mormonism even after death. They will experience suffering and pain for their sins. It's similar to the Christian version of Hell, only not eternal.
  - iv. **Hell (Outer Darkness)** – Eternal hell is for Satan, demons, and "sons of perdition" (e.g., those who deny the Holy Spirit after receiving it:).

### 2. No Salvation Without The Church

- (1) The matrix through which salvation is achieved
- (2) Without its ordinances, under the church's authority, a person cannot achieve the highest levels of salvation.
- (3) The LDS church sees itself as the vehicle of salvation for those on earth and for those who died (who need ordinances performed for them to advance to the highest heaven).

### 3. Works

- (1) Strong disposition towards works and perfectionism

## CONCLUSION

### I. No Other Gospel

Galatians 1:6-12

## **INTERVIEW (ALAN GREER)**

1. Polygamy?
2. Holy Spirit?
3. How were you introduced to Mormonism?
4. How long and how active were you?
5. How pervasive?
6. How was Mormon life similar to Christian life?
7. Dissimilar?
8. How is Jesus obscure in the Mormon faith?
9. What are stumbling blocks to the gospel within Mormon teaching?
10. When did you hear the gospel clearly for the first time?
11. How and under what conditions were you persuaded to leave Mormonism?

## **VIDEO**

