

# Masquerade

The Newest Evangelicals – Part I

Mormonism's Bid For Christian Status

Selected Scripture

## Introduction

By way of introduction to this series of studies on Mormonism, let me share a summary of the basic beliefs with you. I have compiled this summary from reading several books, all of which were written by former or currently practicing Mormons.

There are trillions of planets scattered about the universe which are ruled by gods and goddesses. The purpose of these gods and goddesses is to procreate millions of spirit babies to await their physical bodies which are formed by the birth of humans on planets below. In other words, the gods give birth to immortal spirits and humans give birth to physical beings, who are then inhabited by the spirit beings.

Many years ago, on one of the planets, a spirit child was born whose parent gods named him Elohim. Later, this spirit child was born to human parents and given a physical body. The child grew and became obedient to the teachings of certain doctrines and, after his death, he was resurrected and elevated to godhood, as his father before him. Thus, Elohim now lives with his many celestial wives far away in the galaxy near a mysterious star base named Kolob. Here, Elohim, the Father God of Mormonism, lives and produces millions of spirit beings who await physical bodies on our planet earth.

Now, Elohim wanted to institute a plan to help his human creations find their way to godhood. Elohim called his spirit sons to him to decide. One of those spirit sons, named Lucifer, wanted to force obedience from the humans. Another spirit son,

named Jesus, suggested that people be given a choice and that he be allowed to become flesh and come to earth to show them the way. A vote was taken and Jesus' plan won.

Lucifer became so angry that he convinced one-third of the other spirit children to revolt. Thus, he became the devil and his followers, the demons. They were banished to earth and denied the possibility of inhabiting human form.

Elohim then came to planet earth and had relations with Mary, so that Jesus could be given a physical body and the plan of salvation could begin. Jesus grew and married Martha, Mary, and Mary Magdalene. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He came to the Americas and preached to the Indians, who were actually descendants of Israel's lost tribes. He established a church in the Americas, yet that church failed to gain a foothold.

The last living follower, however, was able to record Jesus' plan of salvation by writing it on golden plates in ancient Egyptian symbols. A direct descendant of Jesus and His wives, named Joseph Smith, discovered those golden plates approximately 1,400 years after they were buried. He also received visions and visits from the angel Moroni, Elohim, and Jesus telling him to establish the pure church on earth.

With the help of visions and his special seeing stone, Joseph Smith was able to translate the golden plates and give the world, through other revelations and visions, a complete gospel. This gospel was entitled, *The Pearl of Great Price, The Book of*

*Abraham, and the Book of Mormon.* This completed gospel teaches that those who have been faithful to the teaching of Mormonism will one day inhabit their own planet and live as polygamous gods, spawning their own millions of spirit babies for all of eternity.

That summary is the foundation for one of the world's fastest growing religions. It is a religion that is building two assembly buildings somewhere in the world every single day; that is doubling in size every five years; that collects more than four million dollars a day from its followers.<sup>i</sup>

Now, did Joseph Smith actually descend from Jesus and His wives? Did he actually receive visions from God the Father? Did the angel Moroni instruct him? Did he succeed in building the restored true church? Or, was he a man who concocted a religion to justify his adultery and polygamy? Was he a self-deceived man who simply repackaged ancient Aryanism, Hinduism, and Masonic rituals to produce another false gospel?

In this series, my purpose will not be to answer to every facet of Mormon religion, nor to attempt to convince Mormons that the scriptures are not complimented by the *Book of Mormon*, but are contradicted by the *Book of Mormon*. I am certainly motivated to deliver this series of messages due to the fact that a Mormon temple is being built nearby, which will draw thousands of Mormons to this area, as well as missionaries who will eventually, end up on your doorstep. My purpose, clearly defined in the New Testament, is to equip the believer and to follow the command of Christ, through the apostle Paul, to be on the alert for false teachers who will come in, masquerading as bearers of truth, but who are, in fact, deceivers.

John MacArthur wrote, in a recent publication, *The most dangerous false doctrines that have ever threatened the church have always been those doctrines that masquerade as orthodox, employing the familiar language of Scripture, but skewing the truth.*<sup>ii</sup>

It is not unlikely anymore, to hear a Mormon say, "I believe in God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit."

It is not unlikely to hear a Mormon say that he has even accepted Jesus as his Savior.

What you need to understand is that they, like all the religions of the world, use the names "God" and "Jesus," and the words "salvation" and "atonement," etc. However, while they use that terminology, they are, at the same time, believing different definitions.

To put it another way, Mormonism, in its bid today, to be viewed as another Christian denomination, uses our vocabulary, but a different dictionary.

Now, let me say one more thing, before we begin comparing Mormon doctrine with the biblical record. I am not on a vendetta against Mormons; I am not out to persecute Mormons. More than anything, I want to reach Mormons for Jesus Christ.

Mormons are our mission. They need to know why the Bible declares, in Acts, chapter 4, verse 12,

*... there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*

They need to know why that contradicts what their president said,

*There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith. No man can reject [his] testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*<sup>iii</sup>

They need to understand that the Bible teaches a final judgement that is different from the one Mormonism teaches. Mormonism teaches that everyone will one day stand before Joseph Smith, along with Jesus and Elohim, and give an account.

Now, for our study today, I want to simply compare two key issues of Mormon doctrine with what the Bible teaches.

## **The Quest of Humans to Become Eternal Gods**

The first issue is the quest of Mormons and their belief in the eventual arrival at a state of personal godhood.

### **The Mormon Doctrine**

Mormons believe that the faithful Mormon man will one day serve his own galaxy as God the Father. And that there, with his many celestial wives, he will populate planets below.

One Mormon author wrote a book that may still be on the bestseller list, entitled, *Embraced by the Light*. The author, Betty Eadie, had a near death experience and lived to write about it. She basically combines her Mormon beliefs with New Age beliefs and concocts a sort of religion that sounds all too familiar. However, she did go on record, in the Utah *Standard-Examiner*, as saying that during her visit to heaven, she learned The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints (The Mormon Church) is, “the truest church on the earth.”<sup>iv</sup>

One of the Mormon doctrines she seemingly attempts to validate is the belief in the pre-existence of human spirits. In other words, every person had an existence in the pre-mortal world. This belief is not taught anywhere in scripture, yet it is a foundation stone to the Mormon belief that every person on earth was, before being born physically, a spirit child, living with his father God while awaiting a physical body to inhabit on planet earth.

Eadie writes about her own recovered pre-mortal memory as she went through the near death experience, saying,

*I remembered the creation of the earth. I actually experienced it as if it were being reenacted before my eyes. This was important. Jesus wanted me to internalize this knowledge. He wanted me to know how it felt when the creation occurred. And the only way to do that was for me to view it again and feel what I had felt before.*<sup>v</sup>

Mormons believe that all people on earth as spirits, were actually present at the creation of this earth by their Father God.

### **The Biblical Record**

What does the Bible actually teach about the beginning of humanity? Turn to Genesis, chapter 2, where you read the detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve. Look at verse 7.

***Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.***

You might say, “Well, that still leaves room for Adam to have been a spirit on Kolob before inhabiting the earthly form of Adam. He could still have seen the creation, in a pre-mortal state, right?”

Wrong. One of the critical arguments for divine sovereignty appears in the book of Job. God asks Job, in chapter 38, verse 4a,

***Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . .***

“C’mon Job,” He seems to taunt, in verse 21a,

***You know, for you were born then . . .***

“. . . so, you should know all about creation.”

And Job could not answer – he was not there.

### **The Mormon Doctrine**

Now, the Mormon belief that pre-mortal souls became human beings is followed by the belief that human souls must act independently of God so that they can ultimately become God. Therefore, the fall of man in the garden; the seduction of the woman by the serpent, is totally turned upside-down, so that the sin of Adam and Eve was actually the beginning of good things.

Brigham Young, in a message preached from the Mormon Tabernacle, on June 8, 1873, said, “I do not blame Mother Eve; I would not have had her miss eating the forbidden fruit for anything in the world.”<sup>vi</sup>

Sterling Will, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, said these amazing words, “Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction . . . toward the goal . . . Adam fell upward.”<sup>vii</sup>

So, Adam and Eve did the right thing? They made the right decision to act independently of God, their Creator, and put into motion that which would ultimately make them gods?

That is what Mormonism believes.

### **The Biblical Record**

However, the Bible actually records that, because Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they did not set the wheels of personal deity into motion, they set into motion the wheels of personal death. Adam and Eve would now die. And, the earth was now cursed.

Let us look at the record. Genesis, chapter 3, verse 1a, tells us,

***Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. . . .***

Evidently, Satan took the form of the serpent. In the garden, the serpent was one of God’s beautiful creations.

Now, you need to understand that we are talking about the time before the fall. Adam’s garden was different than my garden. In Adam’s garden, there was no need to fear. You do need to understand that Satan is not running around town wearing a bright red suit, with a long tail, and carrying a pitchfork looking for coal to shovel. He is an angel of light. He will take whatever appearance necessary to disarm you and deceive you. With Eve, it was the form of a serpent.

Notice, in verse 1b, Satan’s very first recorded words to a human being were,

***And he said to the woman, "Indeed has God said, 'You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?'"***

He casually suggests, "Eve, has God said this?"

Then, if a serpent could smile, he smiled. Satan is not coming across as some brash, rude character. He is suave; he is smooth. Shakespeare said it well, when he wrote, "The prince of darkness is a gentleman."

The serpent came to beguile her. He asked a simple, polite question, "Say, indeed, did God say that?"

Notice the response of the woman in verses 2 and 3,

***And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it . . .'"***

That is not what God said. He only said they could not eat from it, as recorded in chapter 2, verse 17. Eve added the words,

***You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.***

Now that Satan has Eve stretching and exaggerating what God said, he moves her to the next phase. This is when Satan blatantly denies the Word of God as true. Notice verse 4.

***The serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die!"***

In other words, God said, "Eat it and die," but Satan says, "Eat it and you won't die."

Satan is not finished yet. He moves on to attribute evil motives to God, in verse 5.

***For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God . . .***

Now Satan is saying, "It's God who is the real sinner. He's a sniveling coward trying to protect His throne from you, Eve, and from Adam. He doesn't want you to achieve your own divinity; He's an insecure, selfish God."

Then, notice in the last phrase of verse 5, Satan says,

***. . . and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.***

"Listen," he says, "Eat that fruit and it will pay off. Act independently of God and it will bring dividends."

Now, follow this, the very thing that Mormonism explains as progression, the Bible describes as deception.

"Eat it," Satan says, "and you will become another god."

This deception is as new today, in the lives of people, as it was in the life of Eve.

I was watching a talk show and a woman was channeling. If you are not aware of what that is, perhaps some of the younger people, that is when a spirit from another planet, some other universal life, inhabits the body and speaks through the body of a human. That human becomes the channel through which the spirit speaks. This is not something new. It is as old as sin.

I was watching one particular talk show and a woman was channeling a spirit. Finally, someone from the audience raised the question, "Why did you come to planet Earth?"

In other words, she was asking, "If you rule some planet out there, if you have your own kingdom, why take the time to come to Earth?"

I will never forget the woman's answer. Without even a blink of her eyes, she said, in a strange accent, "I have come to let man know that he is divine."

It is the lie of Satan, "Man, woman, you are God."

Look at verse 6.

***When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, . . .***

That is the physical lure.

***. . . and that it was a delight to the eyes, . . .***

That is the emotional lure.

***. . . and that the tree was desirable to make one wise . . .***

That is the intellectual lure.

***. . . she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.***

### **The Mormon Doctrine**

Now the Mormon doctrine would say, this is wonderful. Adam and Eve fell upward; they began the progression toward personal divinity.

Mormon President, Joseph Fielding Smith, wrote in the Mormon doctrinal book called, *Doctrines of Salvation*,

*The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise. I never speak of the part Eve took in this as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of sin, we can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits as being a sin.*<sup>viii</sup>

## **The Biblical Record**

Benefits? According to the Bible, just what were the benefits?

### **Consequences, not benefits, of sin**

1. First, they discovered their nakedness because of their sin.

The first part of verse 7 of Genesis, chapter 3, tells us,

***Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked . . .***

The word “knew,” in this verse, is the Hebrew word that could be translated, “they had intellectual insight”. All of a sudden, they knew something was wrong.

2. The second thing that they discovered was self-effort.

Look at the next part of verse 7.

***. . . and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.***

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the first religious act of history. This is the first act of self-effort to somehow cover over sin; to somehow make themselves better than they knew they were. When Adam, knowing that there was something wrong, something amiss, took it into his own hands to remedy the situation, he made clothing out of fig leaves.

3. Thirdly, they also discovered fear.

Continue to verse 8.

***They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.***

They discovered fear. Imagine, Eve says, “Adam, I hear God. He’s coming.”

“Eve, I hear Him too. Let’s run.”

So, they run and hide behind a tree. And there they are, cowering and trembling in fear. Before eating the fruit, there had been perfect openness and communion with God. Now, however, they are

hiding behind trees. Is this any way for gods-in-the-making to act? Is this a picture of a benefit? Have Adam and Eve progressed? No! They had not fallen upward; they had fallen downward. And to this day, because of sin, you and I do not run to God, we run from Him.

There is something beautiful though, in the expression in the next verse, verse 9,

***Then the Lord God called the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”***

You may go running from Him, but God comes looking for you. God, in the person of Jesus Christ, declared in the gospel of Luke, chapter 19, verse 10,

***[I am] come to seek and to save that which was lost.***

If it were left up to us, we would remain in hiding behind the trees, covered with our religious fig leaves, which were made with our personal self-effort to hide our nakedness.

The tragedy of this whole situation is that Adam and Eve, hiding behind the tree, thought that they could get away from God; thought that somehow God did not know.

Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 13, reads,

***. . . all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him . . .***

### **Consequences, leading to disintegration, of sin**

No, Adam did not fall upward; he fell downward. In that fall, several things immediately began to disintegrate because of his sin.

1. The first thing to disintegrate was his fellowship with God.

In verses 9 and 10 of Genesis, chapter 3, we are told,

***Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked . . .”***

That is a lie. Adam has always been naked in the presence of God and it never mattered before. What he should have said was, “I heard the sound of you in the garden and because I had sinned, I was afraid.”

It has only been a matter of hours, but Adam has already learned how to lie. He is totally out of fellowship with his creator God.

2. Secondly, there is the immediate disintegration of marital harmony.

Continue to verse 11 and note this carefully.

***And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"***

Didn't God know? Of course He knew. In His grace, however, He is allowing Adam an opportunity to make the very first confession in human history. Remember, true confession admits to sin, right?

What did Adam do? Look at verse 12.

***The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."***

Adam said, "Lord, it's all her fault."

Put on your imagination for just a moment. I doubt Eve was very happy about this. Here they are, in deep trouble, and Adam has a chance to bail both of them out. Instead, he tries to distance himself from her and put the blame on her. Imagine the blood in Eve's body turning cold, then hot, and rising up in her neck. That little neck vein is now ten times its normal size. I can imagine her saying, "What did you say Adam? What do you mean, *I* made you do it? I can't even make you take out the trash, much less eat the fruit."

Here they are, having the first division in marital history. Before the fall, they had never argued; they had perfect harmony. Now, they are at each other's throats. I will tell you why, because sin constantly hinders marital harmony.

3. Then, finally, there was the disintegration of physical immortality.

Look at verse 19.

***By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.***

Satan was not totally lying when he said that Adam and Eve would become like God. He lied in implying that they, in becoming like God, would be sovereign over their lives; would be independent; would be physically immortal and never die. And, God delivers the crushing news to Adam and Eve, "You are going to die."

## Conclusion

But wait a second, if you look at verse 22, in Genesis, chapter 3, it seems to indicate Mormon doctrine.

***Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us . . ."***

Would you notice that the triune God did not say, "Behold, he has become one of us."

Even Mormons do not believe that Adam, at this moment, became a God. No, God said, "He has become *like* one of us."

How? Are Adam and Eve now omniscient? Omnipotent? Unchangeable? Sovereign? No! Just look at the next phrase of verse 22,

***. . . knowing good and evil . . .***

Before the fall, Adam and Eve lived in the state of innocence. God knew the difference between good and evil. He had earlier, dealt with the deceptive pride of Satan. Now, mankind also knows the difference between good and evil, as well as the deceptive pride and power of Satan.

Mormon President Spencer W. Kimball said, on October 7, 1974,

***In each of us is the potentiality to become a God – pure, holy, true, influential, powerful, independent . . . we were in the beginning with God . . . man can transform himself . . . he has in him the seeds of Godhood that can grow. He can lift himself by his very bootstraps.***<sup>ix</sup>

The record of scripture shows that the efforts of man are doomed to failure. Paul, in writing the second letter to the Corinthian church, refers back to the fall of Adam and Eve with these words, in chapter 11, verses 3 through 4, and verses 13 through 15.

***But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted . . .***

***For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.***

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 8/1/1999 by Stephen Davey.

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- <sup>i</sup> “The God Makers,” The Detroit News Magazine (May 18, 1980), pp. 15, 31.
- <sup>ii</sup> John MacArthur, The Glory of Heaven, p. 20.
- <sup>iii</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, pp. 189-190.
- <sup>iv</sup> Standard-Examiner (Ogden, Utah, Mar. 6, 1993), quoted by John MacArthur in The Glory of Heaven, p. 19.
- <sup>v</sup> Betty J. Eadie, Embraced by the Light, quoted by John MacArthur in The Glory of Heaven, p. 21.
- <sup>vi</sup> Brigham Young (Mormon Tabernacle, Utah), June 8, 1873.
- <sup>vii</sup> “Church Section,” Deseret News (July 31, 1965), p. 7.
- <sup>viii</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation (1960 ed.), vol. 1, pp. 113-115.
- <sup>ix</sup> Spencer W. Kimball, Salt Lake City Tribune (Oct. 7, 1974).