***Mormonism
RO57-02***

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We have established certain points on the basis of our study of the book of Romans – points which have been established by the apostle Paul on the basis of divine inspiration. These are points relative to the most important question that any human being ever faces – his personal salvation, the place where he's going to spend eternity. You are going someplace beyond death. It does not end there. Your soul and spirit go on forever. In time, even your body will be resurrected.

**Summary of Romans 1 – 5**

So, it is very important indeed to consider the question of exactly where we are going. So, here are certain points. This is a brief review of what we have established from Romans. We're now in the fifth chapter, coming down toward the end. We've gotten as far as verse 15.

1. **Everybody is Lost**

Way back in Romans 3:23, we established the fact that everybody in the human race is lost. They're headed, by natural birth, for the lake of fire. This covered immoral people; moral people; and, religious people –, all types our lost. So, Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The glory of God is the standard of absolute righteousness. Nobody has it.

1. **Sinners Need Absolute Righteousness**

Secondly, we have learned that sinners, in order to be saved, need an absolute righteousness which must come from outside of themselves – a righteousness that equals God's righteousness, absolute righteousness, but which must come from the only place it can come from – outside of themselves. If a human being thinks he can somehow bring a righteousness from within himself that is acceptable to God, he has made a very devastating, eternally condemning mistake. So, don't fall into that trap.

So, in Romans 3:21-22, we read, "But now a righteousness of God, apart from law (from human doing) is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets; even a righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all that believe; there is no difference." So, the Bible very clearly declares here, under the writings of Paul, that a sinner needs absolute righteousness which must come from outside of himself in order to spend eternity in heaven.

1. **We cannot Merit Salvation**

A third point Paul has established is that no one can save himself by self-improvement efforts in order to merit salvation. Romans 3:20, therefore, says, "Therefore, by the deeds of law." The word "law" here means human doing – human effort: "Therefore, by the deeds of human doing, there shall no flesh (no human being) be justified in His sight; for by law." This means the code of God's law – a moral law: "Is the knowledge of sin. But that knowledge of the code of moral law will not save you. And trying to get that code will not save you.

1. **Salvation is a Free Gift Based on Christ's Sacrifice**

A fourth point that Paul is established is that salvation is a free gift from God based on the payment for human sin by His Son on the cross. Romans 3:24, therefore, says, "Being justified freely (or without any charge) by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" being justified without any personal charge to you by the grace of God, meaning by the kindness of God, which gives you the gift of redemption.

1. **Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross Paid for All Human Evil**

The fifth point Paul made is that all human evil has been paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross to satisfy the demands of God's justice against sin. So, Romans 3:25 says, "Whom God has set forth (that is, Jesus Christ) to be a propitiation (or a satisfaction) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God." The apostle Paul declares the principle that all evil has been paid for: past; present; and, future, by Jesus Christ. There is no evil that you can ever commit that has not already been paid for by the Son of God on the cross.

1. **God's Integrity has been Preserved**

Paul has established that God's integrity in saving sinners (that is, in taking sinners into heaven) – God's integrity has been preserved by the work of the cross. Romans 3:26 says, "To declare, I say at this time, His righteousness (God's righteousness), that He might be just, and at the same time, the justifier of Him who believes in Jesus." God does not sin by bringing sinners into His Heaven. God would not violate His integrity in that way. And it is the death of Christ (Paul has shown us) that has enabled God to maintain His integrity while allowing sinners to come into his heaven. In other words, the penalty for their sin has been paid.

1. **Faith Alone**

The basis of salvation (Paul has indicated) is faith alone in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross in the sinners place. Romans 3:28, therefore, says, "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of law (or of human doing)."

Romans 4:3 says, "For what says the Scriptures? Abraham (here's an example of salvation) believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Salvation has always been by faith in the provision that God has made to pay for our sins.

1. **Religious Rituals have no Part in Salvation**

Paul says that religious rituals, which are prescribed by God, have no part in one's salvation. In Romans 4:9-12, he declares to us how the ritual of circumcision, which portrayed indeed regeneration and salvation, is never the means to salvation. It's just a picture of it: "Come at this blessedness, then upon the circumcision only, or upon the circumcision also (that is absolute righteousness)? But we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or circumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness (a testimony to the absolute righteousness) of the faith which he had when he was yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believed, so they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also, and the Father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

The point of this passage being that Abraham was saved before he performed the ritual of circumcision. And all of us who are saved on the faith basis follow Him in that same pattern, and we are His spiritual children.

**Grace vs. Works**

Paul further pointed out that any human doing for the purpose of earning salvation neutralizes the basis of grace which is essential for salvation. You better get that point, because at this point, millions of human beings stagger. Romans 4:4-5 says, "Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of death. But to him that works not, but believes on Him to justify the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Those verses are telling us that works and grace are mutually exclusive. If a person tries to be saved by some human doing on his part, then God cannot save him by grace. If God saves him by grace, then God cannot accept any human doing in the process. If you insist on contaminating grace with human doing, you have neutralized grace. And when you have neutralized grace, you have no way to approach a God who is already satisfied concerning your sin; willing to save you; and, willing to let you go into heaven. But you put a barrier against His provision if you interject human effort. And this passage is telling us that the two are mutually exclusive. It is one or the other.

Then Paul pointed out that salvation is by faith in order to make it available as a grace gift from God apart from human good works (Romans 4:16). It has to be of grace: "Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed." So, what Paul is saying here is that God says, "I'm going to save you by faith so that it can be a grace salvation – it can be a gift salvation." It is just something you believe. In order to be by grace, it has to be by faith. It has to be something that you accept because you believe what God says He has provided for you. You say, "I'm willing to accept that. I'm willing to trust Him for that. I'm willing to go out into eternity on that kind of ground of salvation." "For to be of grace (which is the only way God will save), it had to be by faith.

1. **We can never be Unjustified Again**

Then Paul pointed out that having been justified by God's work alone, we can never be unjustified again by any action on our part. That is the point that he's been pressing here in Romans 5. God did all the work of salvation. You are not involved. You could not contaminate what He did. Therefore, you cannot reverse what He did. So, if you are once born into the family of God, you can never again be unborn. You did nothing to get into the family, and you can do nothing to get back out of it.

In Romans 5:9-10, Paul has written: "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." And Paul is using that argument from the less to the greater – that if God has saved you by the death of His Son, now that His Son lives, you may count on His preservation in that salvation which He has given you, with which you had nothing to do in securing in the first place.

1. **We are Recipients in Both Cases**

Finally, the last point that Paul has established thus far is that all of us were constituted sinners by the fall of Adam, and all believers are constituted saints by the death of Jesus Christ. Men are recipients in both cases – not the agents. So, we have learned in Romans 5:15 (that we looked at in the last session): "But not as the offense also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the grace of God and the gift of grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, has abounded unto the many." What he is pointing out here is that we were condemned in God's sight by the fall of Adam in Eden. His Son was imputed to all of us, and that's why the human race dies. The death of Christ has prepared the ground for the imputation of His absolute righteousness to all who believe. In both cases, we are recipients. We're recipients of death from Adam without our being direct participants. We are recipients of eternal life from Jesus Christ without in any way being direct participants in His death on the cross.

The Bible says that everybody is born headed for hell. But God, through the principles that we have just outlined here, and that the apostle Paul has explained to us under the guidance of the Holy Spirit has made it possible for us to reverse our direction from hell, and all of its agonies to heaven, and all of its joys, and all of its satisfaction.

**Human Beings can Undermine What God has Provided**

However, at the heart of this message (you must recognize) lies the truth that human beings can undermine God's plan of salvation. And that's what I want to direct your attention to now. Human beings can undermine all of this that God has made possible, and all of this that God has provided. They do this with substitute plans, or by adapting salvation, as it's revealed in Scripture, to what they consider compatible to human reason. Need I remind you that God is the final authority concerning the plan of salvation? Need I remind you that God, and God alone, could tell us what has met all the demands of his holy character, and that only He can tell us what the procedure is by which we are going to change from hell to heaven? Obviously, I shouldn't have to tell you that. No one else is qualified to speak on this subject. And unless He gives us this information, we could not know these things.

**Inerrancy**

God's record to us concerning this has come in a Bible that has no mistakes in it. We call this the inerrant Scripture. And in the inerrant Scriptures (and we are speaking of the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts) no error was permitted to enter because God the Holy Spirit superintended the writings of these books, and guided the writers. And the result is that we have a declaration of the plan of salvation which is without error. The Bible has never been proven in error on any single point. Where it has been challenged, relative to what it has declared, it has been proven to be true, and the challengers to be false. And indeed, that's the kind of a book you'd have to have. If you do not have a book without mistakes, then you don't know that you have a book from God.

You and I know (I need not tell you) that any book that some 40 different writers would write that resulted in these 66 books that we have in the Scriptures – they could not write books that would be consistent with each other, many of them who hadn't seen each other, and some who hadn't even read each other's writings. They could not have written books which just dovetail with one another. They could not have written a consistent set of doctrinal viewpoints. But the Bible does.

So, the Bible is a book without error, and it's very important that it should be. There's a great deal of resistance, even among evangelical Christians today, that we should stand for inerrancy. What happens when we stand for inerrancy? When we stand for the inerrancy of the Scriptures, then we immediately dismiss and dispose of the vast numbers of church members and church leaders in the liberal viewpoints, and in many denominations who believe that the Bible has errors in it. Those people are immediately dismissed as being qualified authorities to speak for God, because they don't know really what part of the Bible is true and what part is false. You must have a book without error.

**The Book of Mormon**

The Mormons are faced with a problem. They have a book that they say is as inspired as the Scripture. The publications of the Book of Mormon look just like your Bible. And they have a companion appearance. On your Bible, it will say "Holy Scriptures." And if you've seen some copies of the Book of Mormon, it'll say "Holy Scriptures." I found that when I spoke to Mormon leaders in Salt Lake City recently, who were guiding tours and explaining what they believed (they were the authorized spokesmen), I would asked them, "Do you believe that the Bible was inerrant?"

They would immediately come up inevitably with the idea: "Well, no, there are mistakes in the Bible because of translational errors." And they seemed to be completely oblivious to the fact that the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts are there. That is where the Word of God is contained. And whether a translation may, at some point, be in error, that doesn't affect the original manuscripts. And when I would point that out to them, they would look a little puzzled.

And I would say, "Well, we have, in effect, exactly what the original writers of Scripture wrote in the Greek and the Hebrew. And we have some modern translations, therefore, that we know are quite accurate." And they would look puzzled, like they hadn't thought of that.

I would ask them, "Is the Book of Mormon inerrant?" They would never say, "Yes, it is," because they know (if they're knowledgeable) that there have been thousands of changes in the Book of Mormon to try to correct errors from the time that Joseph Smith first published it. There were thousands of changes in the book that originally started in English – Elizabethan English at that. Therefore, they didn't have to go through a lot of copies and all that stuff. It just had the original thing.

We are speaking about a Bible that is inerrant. And I want you to know that these principles that we have described to you are in the Word of God. If you question any of those principles, and you must go out and research these first five chapters of Romans for yourself, and determine whether these indeed are what the apostle has taught. But remember that what you find here is in a book that God has written. And we know it is a book that God has written because of its inerrancy, let alone its prophetic fulfillment, and for other reasons. It is therefore the duty of a sinner to learn the plan of salvation from the Scriptures, and then to obey it, and not try to come up with any substitutes.

Now what do you think the devil is going to do? Satan is going to try to do just the opposite. He is going to try, on every effort, to contaminate the plan of salvation. He is going to, on every effort, seek to undermine this salvation by grace, apart from human doing, received as a gift from God with, the integrity of God satisfied fully by His Own Son. He's going to try to contaminate (to undermine) that, and to interject, through your reason, your human efforts.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, therefore, tell us: "But if our gospel be hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost in whom the God of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of them who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The Bible makes it very clear that the devil goes about trying to contaminate and to confuse how a person goes to heaven.

Now what if a person believes a contaminated gospel? You must ask yourself: what will happen? What if you believe a contaminated gospel? What if, at some point of the plan of salvation, you interject something that is purely a human viewpoint? What do you think God is going to do about it?

Well, God can do two things. One, He can say, "I have revealed in an inerrant Bible, in an authoritative book, what the plan of salvation is, and that is revealed on the basis of My character. There can be no other plan. There can be no other variation. There can be no other way to be saved, and for Me to maintain My holiness and My character. Now I have revealed that, and if you violate that, and if you deviate from that, then you are lost."

Or God can say, "I have made that revelation, but I know that you are acting in sincerity, and I know that you are undermining the basis of grace, which is the only way I can save you. And I know that you are interjecting your human works, and your rituals of one kind and another. But I know you're sincere. And I'm just going to overlook it, and I'm going to pretend that you are really following My plan of trusting in My Son, and what He has to offer for your sin, and in Him alone."

Those are the only two things he can do now. What do you think a God of integrity can do? Which of those two? Must He send you to hell, or can He just look the other way and let you slip into heaven anyhow?

Well, anybody who knows anything at all about the God of the Bible knows immediately that He would not look the other way; that He would not let you slip in; and, that He would not ignore. If there's anything that's clear in the Bible, from one end to the other, it's that God does not ignore sin, even among His choicest saints. He does not ignore sin. God does not ignore Himself and what he is.

So, if you contaminate the process of salvation, it's going to cost you your eternal soul. It's going to cost you the payment of the lake of fire forever. Now you must understand that. False methods of salvation that Satan brings, however, are going to appear to be from God. They're going to appear to exalt and honor Jesus Christ: "Are you so stupid that you think that if you give glory to Jesus Christ that you have a basis of salvation with God? Do you think that just because you honor the Lord, that you are certainly going to be saved?"

But I read to you Matthew 7:21-23, with a group of people who did exactly that. They gave glory to Jesus Christ. They praised Him. They worked for Him. They served Him. They honored Him. They got together and they had wonderful, charismatic meetings –, all oozy and goozy over the Lord Jesus Christ. And now He meets them and faces them. Here it is at the end of the tribulation period: "And not everyone that says unto Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter into the kingdom of heaven (into the Millennial Kingdom), but he that does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and in Your name have cast out demons, and in Your name done many wonderful works?' And then will I (the Lord Jesus speaking) profess unto them: 'I never knew you. Depart from Me – you that work iniquity.'"

Now I don't know how those words strike you, but those are chilling words to me. And those are words which make it very clear to me that there are some mighty, sincere, dedicated, genuine people who are actually facing Jesus Christ out in eternity, who were right there at the core of Christian service and activity, and of honoring Jesus Christ, and who were following a plan of salvation that was not His, and who are thereby going to receive the shock of being told that they're going to the lake of fire.

What I'm getting at is that there are many people who sit in many churches who have the same attitude that most of you have here today – that when death seals your eyes, your spiritual eyes will open on the face of Jesus Christ. When you close your eyes in physical death, you will find yourself in your soul and spirit in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of you here today are quite confident that that's what's going to happen to you. You have no doubt about that for one moment. And all these people who have a compromised gospel, in one way or another, think the very same thing. They feel exactly as you do. As to whether that will happen to you depends on whether you are following a plan of salvation that God has devised. If you are, you indeed will open your eyes after death on the face of Jesus Christ.

If you are following a gospel of human invention, then you will find yourself opening your eyes in the horrors of the lake of fire. Can you imagine what it's going to be like for millions (and I mean millions) of praisers of Jesus Christ to die and find themselves in the lake of fire? That's very shocking, isn't it? What I'm trying to establish for you today is that either what we learn in Romans is true, or it is not true. Either these principles we outlined at the beginning (that very clearly delineated in a very narrow path how God saves) are true, or else it isn't a narrow path and it's a broad road, and you can take any number of approaches to it. But if it is indeed a narrow path as outlined by these principles, then there is no deviation for then permitted. And those who do going to suffer one inevitable consequence of being forever lost.

So, Satan comes up with something that seems to be praising Jesus Christ. It appears to be from God – having divine authority. It seems to be taught in the Bible – a salvation which is compatible with human reason, and a reason contaminated by the old sin nature. And most people simply do not grasp the fact that God's principles of justification are non-negotiable. They are non-negotiable. There is not one of these principles that we mentioned earlier, that Paul has taught us here, that is negotiable. You can't change it. You can't deal with God on it. However, Satan gives you the idea that it's negotiable, and he gives you a system that seems to come from God.

God's plan is not arbitrarily designed. It evolved out of His essence. It's designed by the demands of His own holiness. And Paul's principles, therefore, not only delineate for us what the plan of salvation is, but by their very statement, they are a warning to us that deviation from them will doom us forever. Your sincerity and your reason will not affect this.

If you like a respect for Satan's power, and for Satan's ability to deceive, and for Satan's capacity to snatch salvation away from you, then you will expose yourself to his deceit. You better have a respect for the ability of Satan to make something appear to be from God and to honor Him, and yet to be a work of hell itself.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15, therefore, say, "And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing that his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness whose end shall be according to their works." Do not think that just because Satan comes to you as an angel of light, that indeed he is representing God. He will not come to you as an angel of darkness. These appearances of Satan come as a misrepresentation of what he really is. So, respect him for that.

**Mormonism**

Now, how can we illustrate this to get the principle of what Paul is saying here? If what he is saying is true, then anything else is excluded with God. One of the prime examples is Mormonism. Today, we must recognize that there are almost four million human beings who believe in Mormonism, and who believe in a way of salvation which is taught by Mormonism which, when looked at closely, is taking people right into hell itself. You may have been to the Temple Square in Salt Lake City, and walked up through that room that is a large room with murals portraying incidents in the life of Jesus Christ, and you saw that huge fame statue of Christ standing that they have in a large round room (nothing in it but that statue, in order to impress you that they are servants of Jesus Christ; that they love the Lord Jesus Christ; and, that their church is named as the Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ. Everywhere you look, there's this emphasis upon honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you realize that it is very, very hard indeed to look upon these people and say, "These people are all going to go to the lake of fire." It makes you very uncomfortable (it did me) to walk around in those buildings, and to realize that I am surrounded by one of the most devastating operations of Satan as an angel of light that you can see anywhere, and that you can find anywhere. Now unless you know some of these people personally, you won't be able to enter in how difficult it is to say that this fine person, so devoted to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; so enthusiastic about the things of God in missionary endeavors, and in right living (morality); and, so dedicated to it, is going to someday open his eyes in the terrors of the lake of fire. And yet, if we look at the faces of salvation of Mormonism, we can reach no other conclusion. These four million people are doomed if this is what they're trusting in for salvation, because they have a deviant form of the gospel.

The question is, after all, the true authority for our plan of salvation. And that authority has to be established as being from God. The apostle Paul knew this was going to be a problem. So, in Galatians 1:6-9, he said to the Galatians Christians, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ into another gospel." The Galatian Christians were falling into a salvation-by-works system.

In verse 7, he says, "Which is not another, but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ." Paul says, "There really isn't another gospel. You've come up with a sham gospel which is not indeed a gospel. It's a gospel which is perverting the truth."

Verse 8 says, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel to you than that which is recorded in Scripture, let that angel be called accursed.

**The Angel Moroni**

Yet you walk into the Temple Square, and up there at the very top spire of the pinnacle of the temple, you will see the golden figure of the angel Moroni blowing his trumpet. Angel Moroni looks like this: "**Moron**i." Unfortunately, in the 19th century, we weren't quite so hot on the first part of this name, or Joseph Smith would have invented another one, I am sure. What a pity it wasn't that Joseph Smith, in whatever that personage was that came to him in that vision, did not recognize that that was a moron speaking to him indeed, and that that angel was bringing him a gospel which was not in the Scriptures.

**Joseph Smith**

However, Satan was such a clever angel of light that what did he do? He actually deceived Joseph Smith into saying what? He actually deceived Joseph Smith into saying, "The gospel has been lost after the first century. It was dissipated. So, now it is being restored. Once more we are receiving the truth which has been lost in ages past."

Now what was Joseph Smith saying? I don't know whether it occurred to him that he was saying that the New Testament did not contain what he called the everlasting gospel – that through 17 centuries, the New Testament was not able to explain to people how to be saved. But Romans was in there, written to explain how to go to heaven. And it was there just as clear as it ever has been.

This monumental deception of a comparatively ignorant man, whatever his sincerity may have been, who had only the general religious knowledge of his day, mostly picked up from camp meeting exhorters – the revivalist preachers who were about as ignorant then as they are now in what they have to give to people. And that's about all he knew about the Scriptures. But he came up with this satanic delusion.

Oh, I'm sure he saw a vision. I'm sure somebody came to him. I'm sure Satan did exactly this for him, and gave him that zeal and impetus that he was getting a special revelation from God that was going to supplement Scripture, and that was going to fill it out. And at the same time, he was saying that the Bible did not contain, in the New Testament, the plan of salvation from God. Consequently, Joseph Smith came up with a whole new gospel delivered to him by the angel Moroni.

One of the things that I heard one of the guides emphasize many times in the tours at Salt Lake City was that they are more Christian than any other denomination. This is because Joseph Smith said that the angel said to him that all the churches are wrong, and that the gospel has been lost, and that there are no men with divine authority to speak and to administer the sacred rites, and that the church structure has been lost. Now it has been restored, in the 19th century.

So, on April 6, 1830, with six members, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded, with a restored apostolic authority; a priesthood; and, a prophet. One of the things that the guides were very happy to reiterate to us was that: "We have a man in our church today who brings us direct current revelations from God, and he tells us *new* things from God. So, we have The Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we have The Pearl of Great Price, and we have these other recordings of the revelations of our president, who is also the prophet of our church.

**The Everlasting Gospel**

So, the everlasting gospel was restored by Joseph Smith. What does the everlasting gospel contain? First of all, I have to start with a basic Mormon concept so that you will understand this plan of salvation. Now if you feel a little goose bump and creepy, you are hearing the doctrines of Satan.

**The Preexistence of Souls**

Here it is: the preexistence of souls. That's an old, ancient, pagan philosophy. That's an old, ancient, mystery-religion principle – the preexistence of souls. And Joseph Smith declared by revelation that man was in the beginning with God. Man was in the beginning with God. That was one of his key revelations that he received. By this, he meant that everybody begins as a spirit child of God, and that every one of you sitting here today preexisted. One whole room in the Temple Square complex (in their presentation) is devoted to preexistence. They have this very impressive movie to show you that you were once in the presence of God as a spirit being. And once in a while, you think maybe you have a glimmer of that; that you existed in a life before; and, that you were someplace else; that is, you were preexistent.

**Is Mormonism Christian?**

How did you come to be spirit children of God? You were procreated by sex in heaven. You were procreated by a heavenly mother and a heavenly father. Let me quote one statement of the writers. I am quoting from a book entitled Is Mormonism Christian? Gordon H. Fraser is the author. It's a very excellent little summary by a man who is well qualified to speak on the subject.

**Orson Pratt**

I just want to read a quote by Orson Pratt, who was considered by the early Mormons as one of their most learned scholars. He says, "The gods who dwell in the heavens have been redeemed from the grace in a world which existed before the foundation of the earth was laid. They in the heavenly body, which they now inhabit, were once in a fallen state. They were exalted also from fallen men to celestial gods to inhabit their heaven forever and ever. We were begotten by our Father in heaven. The person of our father in Heaven was begotten in a previous heavenly world by His Father. And again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on, from generation to generation –from one heavenly world to another, still more ancient, until our minds are wearied and lost in the multiplicity of generations and successive worlds. And as a last resort, we wonder in our minds how far back the genealogy extends, and how the first world was formed and the first Father was begotten."

Remember that Mormonism says that God, the Father of Scripture, was once a child who grew up, and because he lived such an exemplary life, has become God. So, you too are going to grow up and become a god in like manner.

**Bruce McConkie**

Another writer, Bruce McConkie, a member of the First Council of Seventy, writes, "Implicit in the Christian verity, that all men are the spirit children of an eternal father, is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an eternal mother. An exalted and glorified man of holiness could not be a father unless a woman of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a mother. The beginning of children makes a man a father, and a woman a mother, whether we are dealing with a man in his mortal or immortal state."

**Milton Hunter**

Then we have another quote from Milton R. Hunter, who is a contemporary Mormon theologian. He writes, "The stupendous truth of the existence of a heavenly mother as well as a heavenly father became established facts in Mormon theology – a complete realization that we are the offsprings of heavenly parents, that we are begotten and born into the spirit world, and grew to maturity in that realm, becomes an integral part of Mormon philosophy. These verities are basic in the gospel plan of eternal progression."

So, what are Mormons telling us? They're saying that someplace, in some beginning that is absolutely uncertain, there was a father and a mother (a spiritual combination) that came together and generated children. These children took on human forms; went through a period of probation here on this earth; proved themselves worthy of going back to their heavenly father; and, with their wives, started procreating other spiritual children in heaven.

**Heaven**

One of the interesting basic views of heaven in the Mormon theology strikes me as being very similar to that of Mohammedanism – one great eternity of sex. And that's what is the attractive thing about heaven. And thus the happy thing about having multiple wives, because you're producing all these spirit children. And all of you, someplace along the line, have a spiritual father and mother in heaven that procreated you.

**Probation**

These spiritual children leave the Father. They get a physical body. They undergo a period of "probation." Look at that word. It is dear to the heart of Mormonism. It is at the heart of the Mormon gospel. You match that up to the principles that Paul has laid out for us of the scriptural plan of salvation. Is there a probation on earth for you in any way? Is there any way at all on earth for God to test you, and to see if you are worthy of going to His presence because of what you do? That's what they mean by probation? That's the very opposite of what Paul says.

Now these gods are going to procreate a lot of children. As somebody has said, the Mormon picture of heaven conveys the impression of a bunch of unemployed people who have nothing else to do. So, apparently procreation is all they're engaged in.

I had one Mormon lady tell me that the fact that millions of people are going to be the result would be no problem, because there are many worlds that are going to be inhabited, and Joseph Smith had that revelation – that God was inhabiting other worlds with these procreated children who took on physical bodies and themselves became gods.

So, the doctrine of the preexistence of souls is at the heart of the Mormon plan of salvation. Now if this is false, then the whole plan is false. And, of course, there isn't a glimmer or whisper of such a thing in the New Testament.

The basic result of this doctrine of preexistence, however, is this: it eliminates the Bible claim that man is a sinner by nature and by practice, and that he's unable to provide any good works to merit salvation, so that he has to be dependent on the gift (grace) salvation plan. The business of preexisting existing in heaven is that there's nothing wrong with you. And when you come into this life, you're not an inherent sinner. There is the devastating deceit of Mormonism, for the Scriptures make it clear to us that all are sinners, whether you're the immoral, moral, or religious type.

The Mormons like to quote Psalm 139:17-18, which speaks about God knowing all of our secret parts beforehand, as being an indication that He knew us in our spirit world. Of course, that's describing the omniscience of God.

However, but one of the ones they really love is John 9:2, where the man is born blind, and they ask him, "Who sinned? This man, or his parents?" And they say, "You see: preexistence." Edgar Casey used the verse for the same reason. He bases reincarnation on that same verse.

Now it is true that the Jewish rabbis used to debate the question of whether a fetus, yet unborn, could sin or not sin. And that's what these people were asking. This was a rabbinic idea, and they used to debate that viewpoint. They never settled it, but they used to debate whether a fetus could sin or not sin. And they said to Jesus, "Who sinned? This man or his parents (when he was born blind)?" They meant: did this man sin as a fetus, or did his parents previously sin such that he should be born blind?" It has nothing to do with preexistence. They are squeezing in what Joseph Smith said, "God has told me is so." And now they bend the Scriptures to fit this supposed revelation.

One of their key proofs is that Jesus preexisted. They bring this in – the preexistence of Christ. Of course, this is quite true. All of us know that Jesus Christ existed from eternity past for He is eternal God. But he existed as God until the incarnation when he took on the human body. He did not preexist as a spirit that had been generated by a heavenly father and mother.

I think you'll get the feeling about Mormons that I do – that I pity them very greatly. One almost wants to weep at looking at fine people who are so kindly disposed, and who try to be so nice, and who are so nice, and who are going to have the horror of waking up in the lake of fire.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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