

\*\*Note: This handout will be a little lengthier than normal because I have included quotes and extra information not covered in the teaching

## Introduction:

Warnings about False Teachers:

- Matthew 7:15 - 15 *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”*
- Galatians 1:8-9 – *“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.”*
- 2 Cor 11:4, 13-15 – *“4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough...13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.”*
  - Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints checks all of these boxes.
- Goals for Teaching: Protection from heresy, not evangelism

## History of Mormonism

Joseph Smith Early Years:

Joseph Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont on Dec 23, 1805

- Smith frustrated with 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening Preachers
  - “There was so much confusion and strife that it was impossible for a person young as [he] was...to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong” - Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1:8
  - James 1:5, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God...and it will be given him.”*
    - Smith’s interpretation: He could ask God which denomination was correct
  - Smith’s “First vision” of the Father and Jesus:
    - Jesus’ answered Smith’s prayer saying, “[he] must join none of them, for they were all wrong...all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt.” - Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1:18

The Golden Plates and the Book of Mormon:

Three years in later Smith has 2<sup>nd</sup> Vision of angel Moroni

- Tells Smith golden plates are buried near his house and he is chosen to translate them
- Angel Moroni says not show anyone the plates

Joseph Smith translated the plates using “Seer Stones” and putting his head in a hat

- He would use scribes: His wife, Martin Harris (rich neighbor)
- Harris took the only copy home. His wife hid the pages and asked for another translation to see if they would match.
  - Smith said God took away the old plates and gave him new ones
- After Smith finished translation, Moroni conveniently took the golden plates back.

- The “translation” was finally published in 1830 as the Book of Mormon.

### The Story of the Book of Mormon:

The Book of Mormon is the key sacred text for Mormonism

- "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." -Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol. 4
  - Ironic since it's gone through thousands of edits

### Story of the Book of Mormon:

- Story begins with a prophet named Lehi who lived in Jerusalem in 600 B.C. (contemporary of Jeremiah)
  - Has a vision that the Jerusalem will be destroyed
  - Flees to Arabian sea and he sails across the Pacific Ocean to America
- His family split into Nephites and Lamanites and are constantly at war
  - Jesus appears to the Nephites. Preaches the Mormon gospel and established the Mormon Church
  - Lamanites eventually completely defeat the Nephites and become the “primary ancestors of the American Indians.”
  - The Lamanites are then cursed with “skin of blackness”
    - The Book of Mormon also says that dark skinned people repent “shall be a white and delightsome people.” (Later Changed to “shall be a pure and delightsome people.”)

### Other sacred texts in Mormonism:

- The Bible: Like all cults claiming Christianity, Mormonism has to do something with the Bible
  - Uses out of context verses to support doctrines
    - Example: John 10:16 - “*I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also...*”
  - The Bible has been taken away from:
    - "The book has gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, and many plain and precious things taken away it." - 1 Nephi 13:28
    - “I believe the Bible it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, and corrupt priests have committed many errors.” - Joseph Smith
  - Joseph Smith “retranslated” the Bible. Anything that did not make sense to Smith, he “revised”
    - “As guided by the Spirit, Joseph spent about three years going through the Bible, making thousands of corrections to the text and restoring information that had been lost. This restored information sheds marvelous light on many doctrines that are not clearly presented in the Bible as it exists today. These inspired revisions to the text of the Bible are known as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.” – Ladder Day Saints Official Website
  - The Mormon Articles of Faith says that that the Bible is God’s word “as far as it is translated correctly.”
    - “While we do not believe the Bible to be inerrant, complete or the final word of God, we accept the essential details of the Gospels and more particularly the divine witness of those men who walked and talked with Him or were mentored by His chosen apostles.” – Ladder Day Saints Official Website
- The Doctrine & Covenants: largely a collection of prophecies received by Joseph Smith.
  - Part of the “Open Scriptural Canon”: Revelation continually added and taken away from
- The Pearl of Great Price: a collection of five works written by Joseph Smith.
  - Book of Moses: Smith’s “inspired revision” of Genesis 1-6:13

- As Smith is “revising” the Bible, God shows him a vision of God and Moses where God tells him the Mormon plan of salvation at Sinai.
- Book of Abraham:
  - It was supposedly translated from Egyptian scrolls Smith brought from a traveling antiquities dealer. (Smith, who doesn’t know Egyptian, somehow translated it.)
  - Smith claimed it was written by the biblical Abraham while he lived in Egypt.
  - That same scroll was later found and translated by an Egyptian scholar:
    - The dating of the scroll was 200 B.C. (thousands of years after Abraham lived)
    - And it was “The Book of Breathing,” an Egyptian funeral text.
- Smith’s “Revision” of Matthew
- Smith’s History of Mormon Church
- Articles of Faith – Smith’s Creed

### The Founding of the Mormon Church:

The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, and the “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” was formed a few weeks later.

- Note: This is there official name. “Mormons” is a nickname.

### Joseph Smith’s preaching the “restored gospel”

- Smith claimed that “total apostasy” overcame the Christian Church following Apostolic Age (1<sup>st</sup> Century), and the Mormon Church is now the “restored church.”
  - “Latter-day Saints do not accept the Christ that emerges from centuries of debates and councils and creeds. Over the years that followed the death and resurrection of the Lord...the apostasy or falling away of the first-century Christian church was well underway by the close of the first century.” – Latter Day Saints Official Website
- Hallmark of all cult leaders:
  - Church is corrupted, Scriptures have been taken away from, Gospel has been lost.
    - And I am the one bringing the “restored gospel.”

### Joseph Smith’s Authority:

- Claimed John the Baptist ordained Smith to restore true church and true gospel which had been lost
- Claimed Peter, James, and John ordained him with apostolic and prophetic authority
  - Smith, and future leaders of the church, speak as God’s prophets or Apostles, like Moses, or Paul
  - “We need prophets today, the same as in the Old Testament” – Mormon Articles of Faith.
- Very high opinion of himself:
  - “I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. ... Neither Paul, John, Peter nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me.” – Joseph Smith
- Smith’s assistance claimed to have “revelations” from God
  - Smith revelation: only he had the authority to give divine revelation
- Smith was quick to excommunicate anyone who spoke against him
  - Dozens of closest advisors, virtually every right-hand man for 2 decades was kicked out
- His wife, Emma, didn’t like polygamy: Smith had a “revelation” directing to accept polygamy
  - Polygamy: Smith asked God why Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon could have so many wives.
    - God said he “commanded them to” and this practice should be restored

- We don't know the exact number but best estimates are that Smith had around 27 wives. (49 women claimed to be his wife)
  - Oldest on record was 56 years
  - Youngest was 14
- In 1862 Polygamy is officially outlawed in the U.S.
  - The U.S. government begins arresting Mormons for polygamy, seizing church assets, and threatening to disincorporate the whole church.
  - Wilford Woodruff the fourth President, received a "new revelation" to stop polygamy.
  - This is common in Mormonism: The state will outlaw one of their practices and then their leader will receive a "new revelation" shortly after.

### Church Growth, Persecution and Travel:

Searching for "New Zion" where 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and millennial Kingdom will be

Move to Kirtland, Ohio, where Smith builds a temple and bankrupts the church

- Fled after warrant issues for Smith's arrest for banking fraud

Move to Independence, Missouri where Smith said the Second Coming and New Jerusalem would be

- Smith also taught this where the Garden of Eden was (Jackson Country Missouri)

Conflicts with locals:

- People didn't like Mormons because:
  - They typically outnumbered the locals in the towns that they moved to and therefore they had political power
  - Mormonism was so deviant from Christianity: plurality of gods, polygamy, etc.
- They would get mob threats, etc.
- Smith wants to fight back against people unsympathetic to Mormonism
  - Threatened to "exterminate" non-mormon Missourians who opposed them
- They are kicked out of Independence Missouri (new Zion)
  - Smith leads a military campaign to retake the city that fails
  - Travel to Far West Missouri and has "new revelation" of "new Zion"
- Attacked Missouri's state militia and were expelled from the state by Missouri's governor
  - Smith arrested and charged with treason. He escaped custody
- Flee to Nauvoo, Illinois

### Joseph Smith's Death:

Joseph Smith has falling out with top advisors: William Law and Robert Foster

- Smith proposed to their wives
- They accuse Smith of being a fallen prophet and is then are kicked out of the church
- Law and Foster then published in the local newspaper that Smith was teaching polytheism and practicing polygamy (which was technically illegal).

Joseph Smith and others have the printing press of local newspaper destroyed

- Smith and his brother were arrested and put in jail.

A mob breaks into the jail:

- Joseph shot and killed two assailants and wounded a third before being shot and killed along with his brother on June 27, 1844. (He was 39)

### Migration to Utah:

After Smith's death: Split in the church

- Various leaders claiming to be Smith's successors.
  - The majority eventually joined Brigham Young, one of Smith's Twelve Apostles, who led them to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Brigham Young: 55 wives (Oldest 65; Youngest 15); 59 children

- Controversial Teachings:
  - Claimed that every sermon was Scripture
    - "I say now, when they [his discourses] are copied and approved by me they are as good Scripture as is couched in this Bible." – Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13
    - "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call Scripture. Let me have the privilege of correcting a sermon, and it is as good Scripture as they deserve. The people have the oracles of God continually." – Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13
  - Must participate in polygamy to be exalted
    - "The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11
    - "Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives, and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned," – Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3
  - Taught "blood atonement": The idea that if someone leaves the faith, Jesus' atonement can never redeem them. Instead the sinner needs to shed their own blood to atone for their sins and they can still be exalted in heaven.
    - "There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it." – Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3
- Under Young's leadership, Utah prospered and the church grew tremendously.
  - Mormons people from the East flocked to Utah
  - Thousands of new converts were made
- Utah War:
  - Mormons actually went to war with the United States in 1857
  - U.S. Troops seeking to make the way for settlements
  - Mormons paranoid that everyone spies and killed 120 unarmed men, women, and children

### Mormonism Today:

Today, huge effort within Mormonism to:

- Back away from (literally deny) controversial history (polygamy, racism, etc.)
- Downplay the weird stuff (getting planets when they become a god, etc.)
- Today: Over 15 million Mormons
- Over 150 million copies of the Book of Mormon have been printed

## **The "Restored" Gospel According to Mormonism**

## In the beginning, God the Father was a man who was exalted to godhood

The beginning of the story: Technically no beginning in Mormonism

- God has not always been God
- God was first a man (not god), on another world or planet, with another god over him.
  - He follows the laws of his god and is then exalted to godhood.
  - “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!!! ... We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see... I am going to tell you how God came to be God...He was once a man like us...” -Joseph Smith
  - “God Himself is progressive...a Being who has attained His exalted state by a path which now His children are permitted to follow.” - Apostle James Talmage
  - “By obedience to eternal gospel principles, he progressed from one state of life to another until he attained the state that we call exaltation or godhood.” - *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*. (student manual for young Mormons)
- Even after he becomes god, he still has a physical body of flesh and blood.
  - “He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s.” - Doctrine and Covenants 130:22
- God lives near a star called Kolob - Pearl of Great Price, 34-35
  - God is not omnipresent. He is physical and confined to physical space.
- He also brings his wives (he is a polygamist) from his home world, who are said to be our “Heavenly Mothers.”
  - "We have now clearly shown that God the Father had a plurality of wives." Apostle Orson Pratt
  - This teaching later changed to one “Heavenly Mother” after polygamy was outlawed.
- God creates this world from preexisting "chaotic matter." (he doesn't create out of nothing)
  - He now rules over this world
- This is the goal of Mormonism, for man to become a god and rule over his own world.
- Notice: How much deeper the heresy goes than just saying: “Mormons deny the Trinity”
  - God isn't God. He's a man who is exalted to God
    - Has not always been God, not eternal, not infinite, not spirit, he changes over time, he's confined to space, God doesn't create out of nothing, there's more than one God.
    - NOT the same as Christian God

## Heavenly Father, Heavenly Mother, and their Spirit-Children...

The exalted heavenly Father and heavenly Mothers have “spirit-children.”

Jesus was the firstborn spirit child (Jesus is not God, not eternal)

- Jesus is the product of sexual relations between the heavenly Father and heavenly mothers.
  - This is a weird form of Arianism
- There is no Trinity in Mormonism: The Father, Son, and Spirit are three separate gods.
  - "Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God [anyhow]--three in one and one in three...It is curious organization...All are crammed into one God according to sectarianism (Christian faith). It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God--he would be a giant or a monster." - Joseph Smith
  - "That these three are separate individuals, physically distinct from each other, is demonstrated by the accepted records of divine dealings with man" - *Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage
  - Notice: It's not even like Mormons are barely off. These three separate gods.

The second spirit child to be born (although it is debated amongst Mormons if he actually was the second or a later spirit child) is Satan, Lucifer.

- Satan and Jesus are brothers and are equally sons of the Father.

The rest of the spirit children to be born were all of us, the rest of humanity.

- “Once he became God, he and our mother in heaven were empowered to give birth to spirit children whose potential was equal to that of their heavenly parents. We are those spirit children.” - *Achieving a celestial marriage*. A student manual for young mormons
- "The Father, Elohim, is called the Father because he is the literal father of the spirits of mortals. This paternity is not allegorical. All individual human spirits were begotten (not created from nothing or made) by the Father in a premortal state, where they lived and were nurtured by Heavenly Parents" - *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:549
- So Jesus and Satan are our brothers.

The period of life, when we're "spirit children" in heaven, before birth on earth is called "the First Estate," where we grow and mature in the spiritual realm.

The Plan of Salvation: The heavenly Father made a plan for the spirit children to be exalted to godhood

- The spirit children were to go to the earth and become physical so that they can then be exalted
- Mankind would have "agency," which is "ability to choose and to act for yourself"
- God anticipates that man would choose evil and would need a savior.
  - Jesus, God's oldest son, volunteers and the Father accepts
- Lucifer (Satan) offered himself as man's savior, saying in his plan he would deny man their "agency" and therefore no possibility of sin.

War in heaven: After Satan's plan is rejected by God, he grows jealous and rebels, convincing many spirit children to join him in a war against God.

- They were defeated and cast out of the preexistence (Satan's followers became demons)
  - Punishment: Can't be born in human bodies and therefore can never be exalted to godhood.
- Many other spirit children sided with the heavenly Father. These were rewarded by being born of earthly bodies.
- Valiant "spirit children": born into good circumstances and privileged races.
  - "Since they chose the better way, when it comes time for them to live on earth, they have the privilege of being born in races and locations that are relative to their condition and choice made in the spirit realm." -*Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce McConkie
- Less valiant "spirit children": allowed to be born of human bodies but were denied the ability to participate in Mormon rituals and progress to godhood.
  - To differentiate between them, many of the early Mormon leaders taught that the Heavenly Father marked them with dark skin (Mormon explanation for people of color)
    - "Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion against God and his murder of Abel being a black skin...The negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefrom." -*Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce McConkie
    - "It is the Mormon belief that in our pre-mortal state there were a large number of individuals who, due to some act or behavior of their own in the pre-existence, forfeited the right to hold the Priesthood during their mortal lives...the Negro is thus

denied the Priesthood because of his own behavior in the pre-existence," -*The Church and the Negro*

- Mormons denied the for people of color access to their temple, rituals, and ability to progress to godhood, for most of history.
  - Brigham Young taught that if a Mormon “mixed” with an African American, they should be killed: "Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so." (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 10).
- After extreme social pressure following civil rights movement: “new revelation” that people of color people were allowed access to temple

### Adam, Eve, and the Fall

“Spirit children” sent to earth: In this “compression,” the memories of our pre-existence are ‘veiled.’

Adam (Archangel Michael) was the first to come down because he was the most valiant warrior in the war in heaven. He was sent to earth first to The Garden of Eden (Jackson County, Missouri)

The Fall: Adam’s sin was a noble act, making it possible for humans to become mortal, a necessary step on the path to exaltation to godhood.

- “Agency,” the ability to choose and to act for yourself, remains after the fall.
- The Fall does not give man a sin nature
  - People are neutral in matters of righteousness and have no inclination towards sin.
  - Mormonism is Pelagian

### Jesus being sent to earth

Incarnation: Jesus’ birth was “as natural as ours” (Rejects the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus)

- "The birth of the Savior was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood--was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers." - Journal of Discourses, vol. 8
- Jesus was naturally conceived by the heavenly Father and Mary
  - "Christ Not Begotten of Holy Ghost...Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God!" - Doctrines of Salvation, by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954, 1:18
  - "The Father had a Son, a natural Son, his own literal Seed, the Offspring of his body," - Apostle Bruce McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*
  - Brigham Young taught God came down, had “sexual relations with Mary to make the body of Jesus”

Jesus’ earthly life is primarily an example

- Early Mormon leaders taught Jesus engaged in polygamy
  - “Now there was actually a marriage and if Jesus was not the bridegroom on that occasion, please tell who was. If any man can show this, and prove that it was not the Savior of the world, then I will acknowledge I am in error. We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, to be brought into the relation whereby he could see his seed, before he was crucified...I do not despise to be called a son of Abraham, if he had a dozen wives; or to be called a brother, a son, a child of the Savior, if he had Mary, and Martha, and several others, as wives; and though he did cast seven devils out of one of them, it is all the same to me.” - Apostle Orson Hyde

- His teachings “provide a pattern for men and women to live by...to find true happiness and fulfillment in this life.” Jesus is example, not the One we rely on to live the perfect life on our behalf.

After Jesus Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, He visited the Americas and preached the “restored gospel” to the Nephites. (So the second coming already happened in America)

Christ’s Atonement: Jesus’ work combines with our works

- “We must work to our limit” and grace of Christ only comes “after we have expended our own best efforts.” (2 Nephi 31:19; Moroni 6:4)
  - "One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation," - Spencer W. Kimball twelfth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- Forgiveness of sins dependent on good works:
  - "The Christian dogma of justification by faith alone has exercised an influence for evil" - James Talmage Latter-Day Saints Apostle
  - An individual’s forgiveness of sins is conditioned on 'obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel'" - Joseph Smith
- You must “remain worthy” to keep the gift of the Holy Spirit
  - The Holy Spirit is available “only to those who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and remain worthy...After receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, a person has the right to the constant companionship...if he or she keeps the commandments.” – *Gospel Principles and Doctrines*
- Different “effects” of Atonement:
  - “General Salvation”: Jesus’ atonement "secures to all mankind alike, exemption from the penalty of the fall, thus providing a plan of General Salvation." - Articles of Faith, by James Talmage
  - This is whether they repent and believe or not. (Basically Universalism)
  - “Individual Salvation”: “Jesus’ atonement opens the way for our path to salvation (exaltation to godhood)” -Articles of Faith, by James Talmage
    - Mormonism somehow teaches universalism and salvation by works at the same time.

Salvation: Being exalted to godhood, like the Father

Goal is exaltation to godhood, just as the Father was

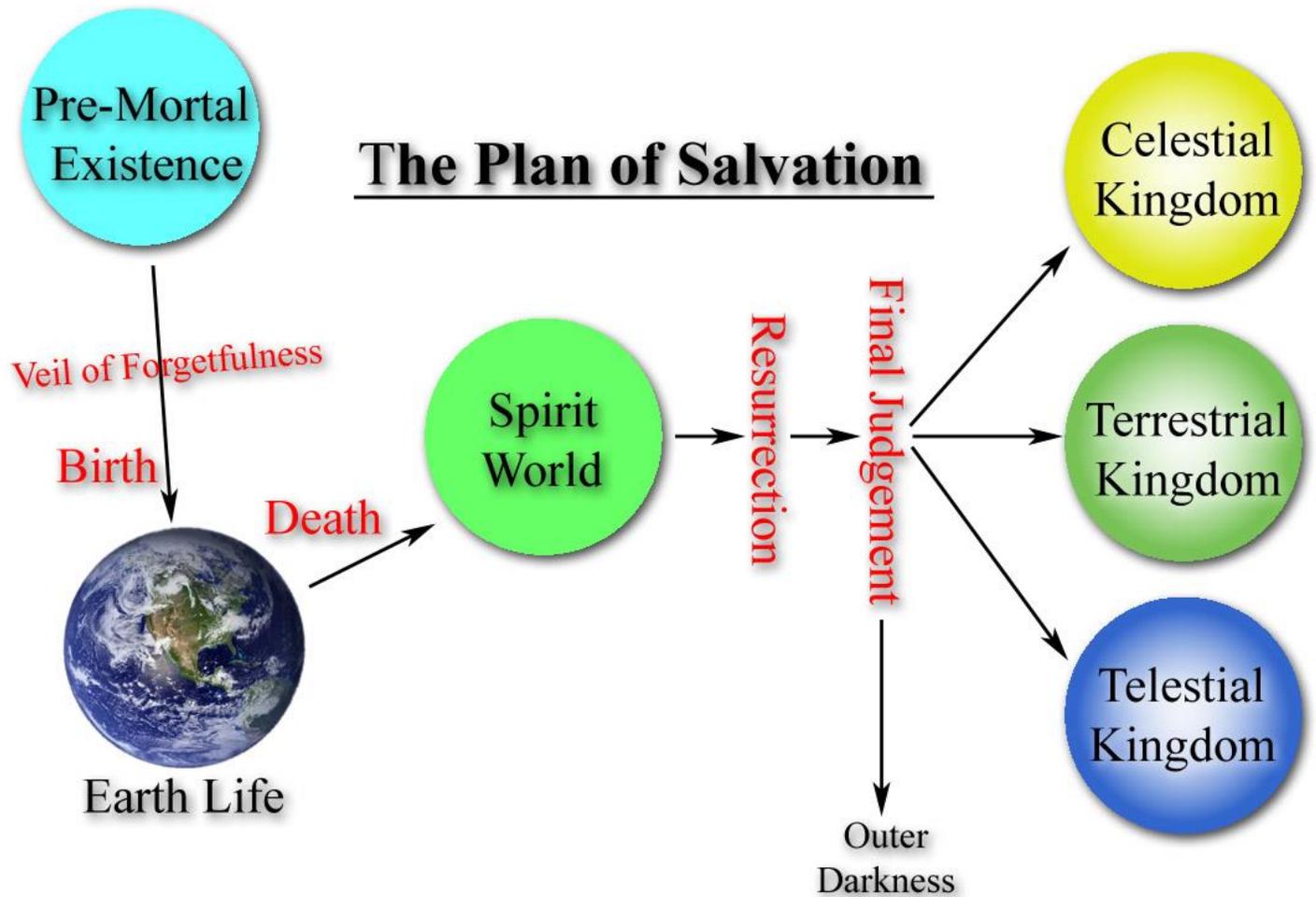
- “As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be” - Lorenzo Snow
  - “You have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you...” - Joseph Smith

Exaltation is accomplished by being a good (valiant, faithful) Mormon

- This is not a free gift. You have to work for it.
  - “After you become a good Mormon, you have the potential of becoming a god.” -*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.*
- A person must:
  - Be “found worthy”
  - Have faith in Mormon Jesus
  - Believe Joseph Smith was a prophet
  - Baptized into the Mormon Church
  - Pay 10% tithe to Mormon church
  - No alcohol, coffee, tea, or tobacco
  - Participate in secret Temple Rituals:

- Note: Joseph Smith and many early Mormon leaders were Freemasons so much of these are taken from Masonry
- Endowment Ceremony:
  - Washed and anointed
  - Given new secret name (SECRET)
  - Temple Garments (Mormon Underwear)
    - Wear under clothes day and night
    - To remind you of commitment and "when properly worn...provides protection against evil."
  - Taught password: to get past angels guarding the way to heaven (SECRET)
  - Leaning secret handshakes: to get into third level of heaven (SECRET)
  - Various oaths of secrecy and commitment
    - Dedicate life and possessions to Mormon Church
- Changed Rituals (taught by Smith and Young):
  - Oath of Vengeance: Pray that God would avenge Smith's blood by judging America
    - "You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray and never cease to pray to Almighty God to avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation, and that you will teach the same to your children and to your children's children unto the third and fourth generation."
  - Penalty Oath: Oaths of what will happen if you reveal anything secret
    - **\*\*Very graphic:** "My throat ... be cut from ear to ear, and my tongue torn out by its roots. Our breasts ... be torn open, our hearts and vitals torn out and given to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. My body...be cut asunder and all your bowels gush out."
- Marriage ceremony joining couples together for "time and all eternity"
  - (because you need a goddess wife to make "spirit children")
    - The husband is given a secret name by which to call for his wife(s) once he is exalted. They cannot be exalted unless he calls them up.
  - "A person must be married for eternity in the temple to obtain this highest degree of the celestial kingdom." - Joseph Smith
- You need a temple and rituals for salvation
  - Not saved by person and work of Jesus. You're saved by temple rituals.
- Baptism for the dead:
  - Rituals performed on behalf of dead relatives
    - The dead relatives can then ascend to the highest level of Mormon heaven

Hell, The Three Levels, and Starting the Whole Story Over Again...



After death: Everyone goes to one of two places in the “Spirit World”

- “Paradise”: Valiant Mormons
- “Spirit Prison”: Everyone else
  - Missionaries from Paradise to Spirit prison to evangelize the “restored gospel”

Resurrection and Judgement day: Judged to see where you go

- Brigham Young taught that Joseph Smith was the judge:
  - “...no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith.” - Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7

There is an “outer darkness” (hell) that Satan and his demons go to.

Three levels/Kingdoms of salvation: Where you go depending on your level of faithfulness, **not Christs**

- Telestial Kingdom: Lowest degree, is for “liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers.” – Doctrines and Covenants 76:103 (Still “a place of indescribable glory.”)
- Terrestrial Kingdom: Second degree, for honorable people not valiant enough for the highest level
- Celestial Kingdom: Highest degree, where all Mormons want to go
  - It is also divided into three levels. The highest degree where people will exalted as a god
    - Once you’re a god, can create your own world
    - Wife on earth is “heavenly mother” who you have “spirit children” with
      - Originally we were to be polygamists in heaven (like the heavenly father).
        - Later changed when polygamy stopped
    - Spirit children eventually will go on an earth and start it all over:

- Become mortal
- If faithful, then they also will be exalted to godhood
- You get to be a God and start all over with your own planet, your own spirit-children, etc.
  - "Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them" - Doctrine and Covenants, 132:20

Notice: Mormonism most polytheistic religion that has ever existed.

### Systematic Theology Review:

#### Scripture:

- Deny authority
- Deny sufficiency
- Deny trustworthiness
- Deny Inerrancy
- Deny clarity
- Deny necessity

#### Trinity:

- Three separate unequal gods who themselves are one of countless gods

#### God the Father:

- A flesh and bones man
- Not always been god
- Not infinite Creator
- God changes over time
- Not eternal
- He didn't create out of nothing
- Not spirit
- Not all powerful, all knowing, or present everywhere

#### Jesus:

- Not God
- A created being, like the rest of humanity
- His life is just an example.
- His sacrifice isn't sufficient. You have to work for it first.

#### Spirit:

- Not god like the Father or the Son
- Not the seal of salvation. Just an aid in your own efforts.
  - Could leave you if you're not good enough.

#### Man:

- The same nature as Jesus and Satan
- Not sinful by nature

#### Salvation:

- Man's exaltation to become a god

- Does this through his own effort and rituals and superstition

Eschatology:

- Jesus' second coming has already happened in America
- God does not justly judge the wicked.
- Salvation isn't knowing the one true God, it's becoming a god yourself

## **The Christian Response to Mormonism**

Watch Out for Heresy

Don't fall into the "nice" trap:

- Biblical love doesn't exist without true doctrine
- Don't allow someone's external behavior to numb you to their heresy that leads to damnation.
  - Remember, "*Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*"

Don't fall into the equivocation trap: same terminology. Same terminology does not equal same belief

- President Brigham Young said, "We, the Latter-day Saints, take the liberty of believing more than our Christian brethren: we not only believe ... the Bible, but ... the whole of the plan of salvation that Jesus has given to us. Do we differ from others who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? No, only in believing more." (Notice the attempt to downplay differences)
  - Mormonism is not Christianity + a few other things
    - Mormonism by its very nature is an attack on the Christian faith
      - The Trinity is an abomination in their eyes
      - Jesus as the eternal Son coming down in the flesh for us and for our salvation is an abomination in their eyes

How do we protect ourselves:

- Know the Scriptures: "Hard to see a lie if you don't know the truth." -Zach Lee
- Know Theology: Know the foundation of your faith
- Know Church History: Nothing new under the sun