

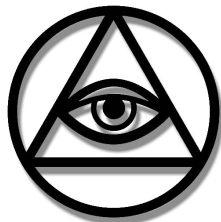
Cults and Other “Gospels”

Recognizing and Understanding the Differences



Cults and Other “Gospels”

- ♦ **Remember our definition of a “cult”**
 - ♦ **I've recommended six questions to ask yourself about any religious groups that seem at least potentially suspicious to you...**
 1. **Does the group have a prophet/founder who is revered by followers and claims to have *special* revelation from God or from angels?**
 2. **Are there authoritative writings or scriptures *in addition to* or *instead of* the Bible?**
 3. **Does the group view itself as the one *true* church, founded because the *true* gospel was lost in the early centuries of the church?**
 4. **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**
 5. **How does the group believe we are *saved*? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 6. **What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?**



Cults and Other “Gospels”

- ◆ Introduction to Cults
- ◆ Peoples Temple
- ◆ **The Mormons**
(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints)

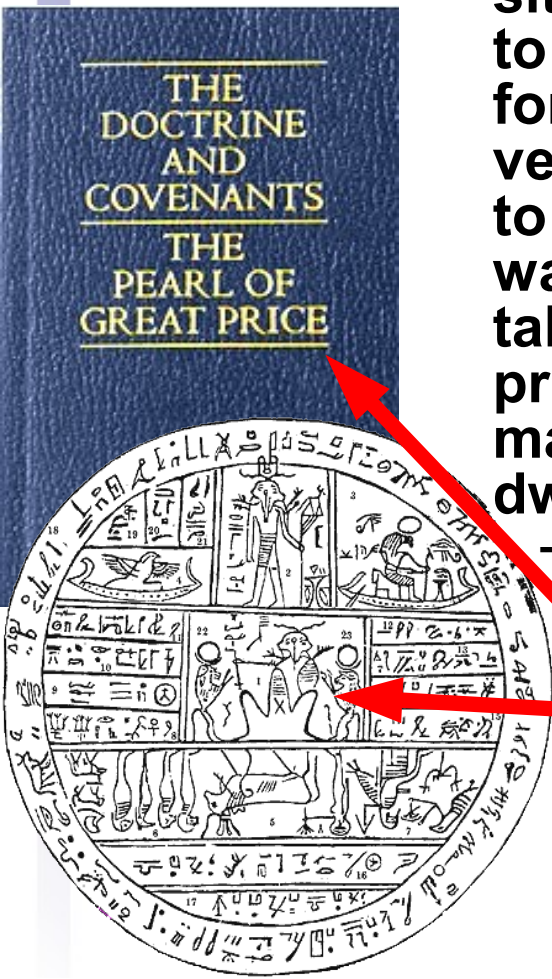


Mormons

- ◆ So, carrying on with our six questions...
 - ◆ What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?

- ◆ “God was once as we are now, an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens... I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves and all the person, image and very form of man. I'm going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. It is the first principle of the Gospel to know... that he was once a man like us, yea, that god Himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ did...”

—Joseph Smith, in a funeral sermon in *Times and Seasons*
(NOTE: *The Book of Abraham* gives the name of the original planet that God grew up on as Kolob —Smith having gotten that information from studying his papyri—particularly the one described as a “singular scrawl”)



Mormons

- ◆ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ◆ **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**
 - ◆ “God was once as we are now, an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens... I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see him like a man in form...”
—Joseph Smith, in a funeral sermon in *Times and Seasons*
 - ◆ **“We were begotten by our Father in Heaven; the person of our Father in Heaven was begotten on 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...”**
—Orson Pratt, in *The Seer*



Mormons

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- ◆ “We were begotten by our Father in Heaven; the person of our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father...”

—Orson Pratt, in *The Seer*

“In the beginning, the head of the gods called a council of the gods and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it...”

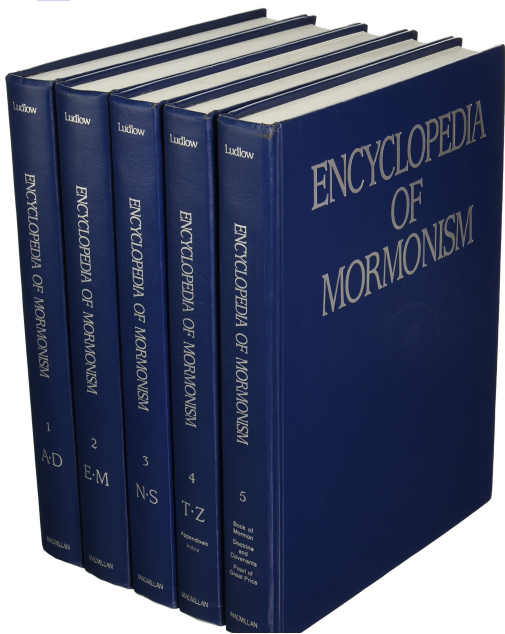
—Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*

(NOTE: God had several sons before time began—including such luminaries as Jesus, Satan, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph Smith—but Jesus is the only one born of God's sexual union with Mary)



Mormons

- ❖ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ❖ **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**
 - ❖ **What about the Holy Spirit?**
 - ❖ **“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the Holy Ghost is a spirit man, a spirit son of God the Father.”**
—from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*
 - ❖ **“After a person is baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints... the person is given the gift of the Holy Ghost. The *gift* of the Holy Ghost is different from the *influence* of the Holy Ghost. Before baptism, a person can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost from time to time and through that influence can receive a testimony of the truth. After receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, a person has the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead if he or she keeps the commandments.”**
—from the online *Gospel Topic Essays*



Mormons

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 - ♦ What does the group believe regarding the Trinity?
Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity?
Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?
 - ♦ What about the Holy Spirit?
 - ♦ “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s. The Son also...”
 - Joseph Smith, in a sermon at Ramus, Illinois (1843)
(NOTE: Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:24,
“*God is spirit*, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”)
(NOTE²: Remember, Joseph Smith had taught the same thing in his *Lectures on Faith*...
“The Father being *a personage of spirit*, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness...”)



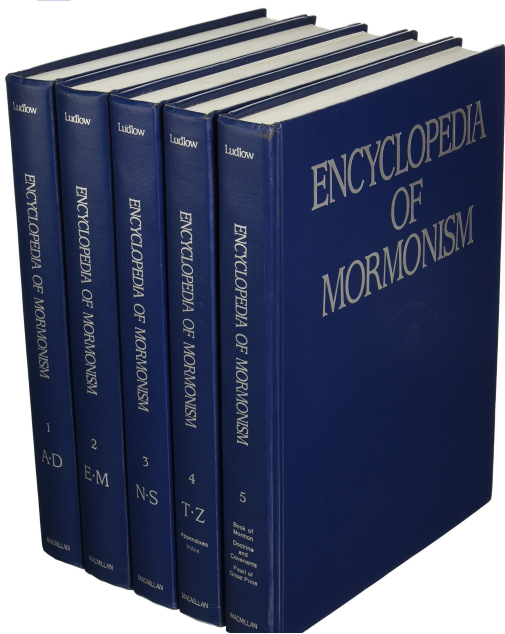
Mormons

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—Joseph Smith, in a sermon at Ramus, Illinois (1843)
(NOTE: This sermon was later redacted in the *History of the Church* to read,
“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. *Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.*”)



Mormons

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—Joseph Smith, in a sermon at Ramus, Illinois (1843)
 - ❖ **“In a figurative sense, the Holy Ghost dwells in the hearts of the righteous Saints of all dispensations...”**
—from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*
 - ❖ **“He can be in only one place at a time, but His influence can be everywhere at the same time.”**
—from *Gospel Principles*



Mormons

- ♦ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ♦ **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**

(NOTE: But remember, the Mormons said the same about God the Father as well—

- ♦ **“Some would have us believe that God is present everywhere. It is not so. He is no more everywhere present in person than the Father and Son are one in person. The Bible teaches that doctrine precisely as it is.”**

—Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*)

- ♦ **Read Jeremiah 23:24**
- ♦ **Read Psalm 139:7-10**



Mormons

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—Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*)

(NOTE²: But remember, as we saw before...

“God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.”

—Bruce McConkie, in his *Seven Deadly Heresies* speech
“Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or George Q. Cannon or whoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation.”

—Bruce McConkie,

in *Highlights from His Life & Teachings*)



Mormons



Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ In 1966, a Mormon named Morris Reynolds wrote to the Quorum of the Twelve with three concerns that had come up about their faith
- ◆ Quorum member Hugh B. Brown replied to him
- ◆ “None of the early revelations of the Church have been revised, and the Doctrine and Covenants stands as printed...”



THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84141

May 13, 1966

Mr. Morris L. Reynolds
311 Nichols Hall
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho

Dear Brother Reynolds,

Replying to your recent letter, which was undated, I am pleased to advise you as follows in answer to your questions.

None of the early revelations of the Church have been revised, and the Doctrine and Covenants stands as printed including sections 5 and 7. These two sections and some others are addressed directly to certain individuals, but there are lessons in them for all of us, and therefore they have not been deleted.

The Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine of the Church, and the reports on that subject as published in the Journal of Discourses are not accurate. The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

There is no doctrine of the Church requiring the shedding of blood for the salvation where certain sins have been committed. We have been accused of such doctrine, but it is not true.

I am glad that you are investigating the Gospel and shall be glad if in any way I can be helpful.

Sincerely your brother,

HBBrown

Hugh B. Brown



In fact, there have been nearly 4,000 changes made to the Book of Mormon, as well as thousands to the Doctrine and Covenants

BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS - Chapter 24
COMPARE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS - Sec. 20:48-68

W.A. = Words Added
W.D. = Words Deleted
T.C. = Text Change

WHEN THERE IS NO ELDER PRESENT, BUT WHEN THERE IS AN ELDER PRESENT, HE IS ONLY TO PREACH, TEACH, EXPOUND, EXHORT, AND BAPTIZE, AND VISIT THE HOUSE OF EACH MEMBER, EXHORTING THEM TO PRAY VOCALLY AND IN SECRET AND ATTEND TO ALL FAMILY DUTIES. IN ALL THESE DUTIES THE PRIEST - T.C.

IF OCCASION REQUIRES - W.A.
W.D.

HE IS TO - W.A.
W.D.
IF OCCASION REQUIRES - W.A.
OR LAY ON HANDS; THEY ARE, HOWEVER, T.C.
AND HE IS TO BE ORDAINED - W.A.
AND SAID CONFERENCES ARE - W.A.
WHATEVER - W.A.
W.D.
MAY - T.C.
CERTIFICATE - W.A.
TO - W.A.
DUTIES - T.C.
W.D.
OR HE MAY RECEIVE IT FROM A CONFERENCE, NO PERSON IS TO BE ORDAINED TO ANY OFFICE IN THIS CHURCH, WHERE THERE IS A REGULARLY ORGANIZED BRANCH OF THE SAME WITHOUT THE VOTE OF THAT CHURCH; BUT THE PRESIDING ELDERS, TRAVELING BISHOPS, HIGH COUNCELLORS, HIGH PRIESTS, AND ELDERS, MAY HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF ORDAINING, WHERE THERE IS NO BRANCH OF THE CHURCH THAT A VOTE MAY BE CALLED. EVERY PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD (OR PRESIDING ELDER), BISHOP, HIGH COUNCELLOR, AND HIGH PRIEST, IS TO BE ORDAINED BY THE DIRECTION OF A HIGH COUNCIL OR GENERAL CONFERENCE.
W.A.

Mormons



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◆ “Adam is our Father and our God.”

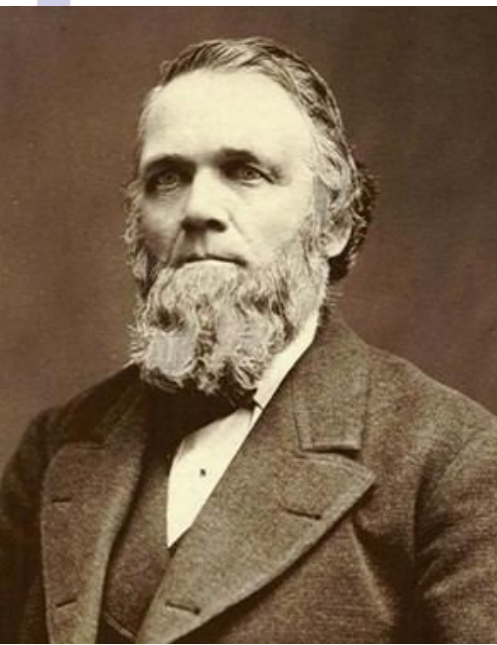
—Brigham Young, *Deseret News*

◆ “Adam was the father of Jesus and the only God to us.”

—Hosea Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*

◆ “Adam is our Father and God... the Prophet and Apostle Brigham has declared it, and that it is the word of the Lord.”

—Franklin Richards, *Millennial Star*



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Mormons



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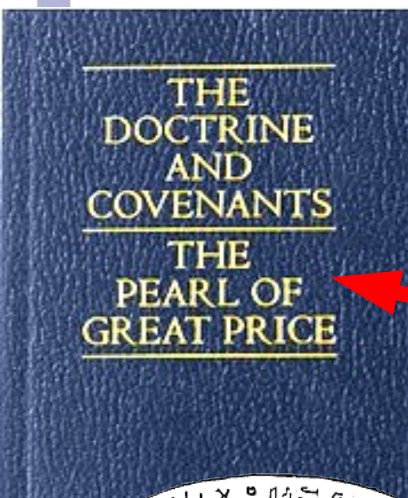
- ◆ (NOTE: Brown straight-up lied to Reynolds...
... but lying about your beliefs—or at least withholding or “forgetting” the truths about your beliefs—is a practice upheld by Mormon Scriptures as an act of love)

“These are the words which I spake unto my servant Moses, and they are true even as I will; and I have spoken them unto you. See thou show them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe...” (Moses 4:32)

And multiple parts of this facsimile in the Book of Abraham “cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God...”

Compare that with the *Christian* perspective:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be *thoroughly* equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)



Mormons



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 - ◆ “There is not a man or woman who violates covenants made with their God that will not be required to pay their debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out. Your own blood must atone for it; the judgments of the Almighty will come sooner or later, and every man and woman will have to atone...”



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—Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*

HBB/ga

Mormons



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 - ◆ “There is no doctrine of the Church requiring the shedding of blood for the salvation where certain sins have been committed. We have been accused of such doctrine, but it is not true...”
 - ◆ “... I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain in order to atone for their sins... This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on earth in order to be saved, spill it...”
—Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*



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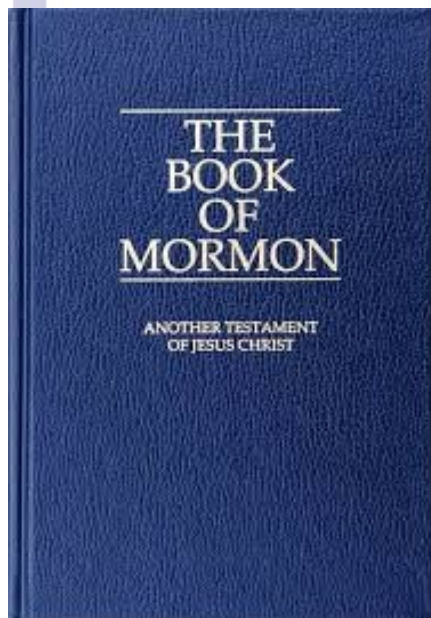
Mormons

- ◆ So, carrying on with our six questions...
 - ◆ How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?
 - ◆ “Christians speak often of the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. Much that is believed and taught on this subject, however, is such utter nonsense and so palpably false that to believe it is to lose one's salvation. Many go so far, for instance, as to pretend and at least to believe that if we confess Christ with our lips and avow that we accept Him as our Saviour, we are thereby saved.”

—Bruce McConkie, in *What the Mormons Think of Christ*

(NOTE: Remember what Paul said in Romans 10:9?

“If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”)



Mormons

- ♦ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ♦ **How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 - ♦ **“Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation through that perfection which comes by complying with the formula the Lord gave us... Perfection therefore is an achievable goal...”**
 - Spencer Kimball, in *The Miracle of Forgiveness*
 - ♦ **“Grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts.... Grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient. Hence the explanation,**
 - “It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.” (2 Nephi 25:23)**
 - from the *LDS Bible Dictionary*



(NOTE: Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9?
“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”)



Mormons

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 - ◆ **“There is not a man or a 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, in *Journal of Discourses*
 - ◆ **“Jesus Christ redeemed all from the fall; he paid the price; he offered himself as a ransom; he atoned for Adam's sin, leaving us responsible only for our own sins...”**
—LeGrand Richards, in *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*
(NOTE: As Christian apologist Alan Gomes has summarized, “In atoning for Adam's sin, Christ's death procures what they call 'general salvation,' which means that all people, believers and unbelievers alike, will be resurrected. However, his atonement does not secure 'specific salvation,' which one attains only through following the precepts of Mormonism, most particularly baptism, repentance, faith, and good works.”)
—in *The Deity of Christ*



Mormons

- ◆ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ◆ **How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 - ◆ **So, for instance, Mormons often spend a great deal of time and effort on having warm, loving families—but the motivation for that is intertwined with the fear that *without* them, they can't *really* be saved**
 - ◆ **“Parents have the vital responsibility to help their children prepare to return to Heavenly Father... Just as sin, mortal weaknesses, emotional hurt, and anger are conditions that separate God’s children from Him, these same conditions can separate family members from each other... To qualify for the blessings of eternal life, families need to learn the doctrines and receive the priesthood ordinances that are available only through the Church... Teach the preeminence of the home and family as the basic organizational unit of the Church. Emphasize the place of the higher priesthood in helping individuals and families qualify for exaltation...”**
 - in *The Mormon Handbook*



Mormons

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—in *The Mormon Handbook*

(NOTE: The *Handbook* then cites Doctrine and Covenants 84:21-22:

“Without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.”)

THE
DOCTRINE
AND
COVENANTS
THE
PEARL OF
GREAT PRICE

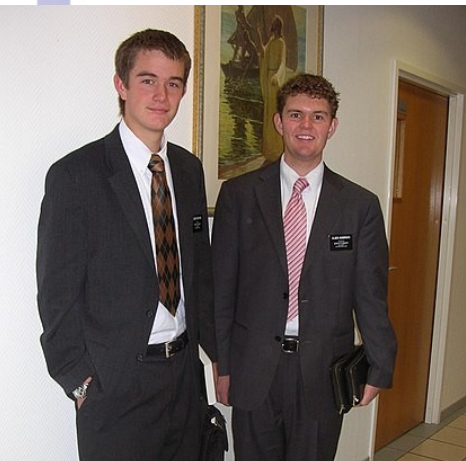
MORMON HANDBOOK



Mormons

- ♦ So, carrying on with our six questions...
 - ♦ How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?
 - ♦ So, for instance, Mormons often spend a great deal of time and effort on having warm, loving families—but the motivation for that is intertwined with the fear that *without* them, they can't *really* be saved
 - ♦ Thus, everything in the Mormon's life—including raising a happy, loving, wholesome, “eternal” family—is part of trying desperately to earn salvation through their perfect works here on earth, including attending regular worship services, receiving baptism into the priesthood of believers, holding weekly Bible studies at home as families, and doing missionary work

(NOTE: Missionaries are usually between the ages of 18-21, with males serving for 24 months and females serving for 18 months... and *most* young Mormon males choose to do missionary work... which is why in 2018, the Southern Baptists—the largest Protestant denomination in the world—fielded 3,500 missionaries, while the Mormons fielded over 70,000)



Mormons

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THE
BOOK
OF
MORMON

ANOTHER TESTAMENT
OF JESUS CHRIST



Mormons



Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ Let's talk about underwear...

First off, officially, this isn't "underwear" in the common sense—it's the "temple garment" which is to be worn beneath a Mormon's clothes at all times

- ◆ "Once people are endowed..."

(that is, once they have undergone a ritual in a Mormon temple to be brought into the faith)

(NOTE: Mormon temples aren't places of weekly worship like Christian churches—that's what various local Mormon meetinghouses are intended to be used for—but are instead used for special rites and secret ceremonies that induct Mormons into deeper and deeper echelons of faith)



Mormons



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(NOTE: Mormon temples aren't places of weekly worship like Christian churches)
(NOTE²: These rituals include celestial marriages—but more on those later—
vows to join the priesthood of Melchizedek (including being given special secret handsigns or “tokens,” at which point they promise,
“I will never reveal the first token of the Melchizedek priesthood, or Sign of the Nail, with its accompanying name, sign, and penalty. Rather than do so, I would suffer my life to be taken.”)



Mormons



Funky little teaching moment...

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 - ◆ First off, officially, this isn't “underwear” in the common sense—it's the “temple garment” which is to be worn beneath a Mormon's clothes at all times
 - ◆ “Once people are endowed...”
(that is, once they have undergone a ritual in a Mormon temple to be brought into the faith)
(NOTE: Mormon temples aren't places of weekly worship like Christian churches)
(NOTE²: These rituals include celestial marriages—but more on those later—
vows to join the priesthood of Melchizedek, committing to the Law of Consecration
 (“You do consecrate yourselves, your time, talents, and everything with which the Lord has blessed you, or with which he may bless you, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth and for the establishment of Zion”))



Mormons



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vows to join the priesthood of Melchizedek, committing to the Law of Consecration, being baptized—including for the dead
(Since everyone will be resurrected to some form of afterlife, then even the dead can be saved through baptism by proxy, as taught in Doctrine and Covenants 128)
(Thus, the Mormons keep rigorous records of all births and deaths to catalogue every human being so that they can get baptized to retroactively save them)

THE
DOCTRINE
AND
COVENANTS
THE
PEARL OF
GREAT PRICE



Mormons



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vows to join the priesthood of Melchizedek, committing to the Law of Consecration, being baptized—including for the dead —listening to a scripted interaction between the gods Elohim [the Father] and Jehovah [Jesus], where their messengers ask them to send down Peter, James, and John to instruct Adam and his posterity about the secret temple rituals, etc.)



Mormons



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 - ◆ “Once people are endowed, they have the blessing of wearing the temple garment throughout their lives. They are obligated to wear it according to the instructions given in the endowment. Those who have been endowed in the temple must remember that the blessings that are related to this sacred privilege depend on their worthiness and their faithfulness in keeping temple covenants... When worn properly, the garment provides protection against temptation and evil. Wearing the garment is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior.”

—from the *Mormon Handbook*

MORMON HANDBOOK



Mormons



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—from the *Mormon Handbook*
 - ◆ Elder Carlos E. Asay describes the temple garments as an unspoken part of the “armor of God” spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 6—
“This garment, worn day and night, serves three important purposes: it is a reminder of the sacred covenants made with the Lord in His holy house, a protective covering for the body, and a symbol of the modesty of dress and living that should characterize the lives of all the humble followers of Christ.”
—in the *Mormon Handbook*

MORMON HANDBOOK



Mormons



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 - ◆ First off, officially, this isn't “underwear” in the common sense—it's the “temple garment” which is to be worn beneath a Mormon's clothes at all times
 - ◆ “The Lord has given unto us garments of the holy priesthood, and you know what that means. And yet there are those of us who mutilate them, in order that we may follow the foolish, vain, and (permit me to say) indecent practices of the world. In order that such people may imitate the fashions, they will not hesitate to mutilate that which should be held by them the most sacred of all things in the world, next to their own virtue, next to their own purity of life. They should hold these things that God has given unto them sacred, unchanged and unaltered from the very pattern in which God gave them. Let us have the moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion, and especially where fashion compels us to break a covenant and so commit a grievous sin.”

—Joseph F. Smith, in *The Improvement Era* (1906)



Mormons



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—Joseph F. Smith, in *The Improvement Era* (1906)
(NOTE: Smith was actually talking about the *original* pattern for the garments, “which God gave them” back in 1842—complete with open crotch, tie-string closures, and special symbols stitched onto the breasts of the male versions—symbolizing the “square” on the right breast and the “compasses” on the left breast—symbols which echoed those of the hidden, “temple mysteries” of the Masonic Lodge which Joseph Smith and several other LDS leaders had joined in Nauvoo... in 1842...)
(in fact, most of the Mormon temple ceremonies echo the Masonic ones)

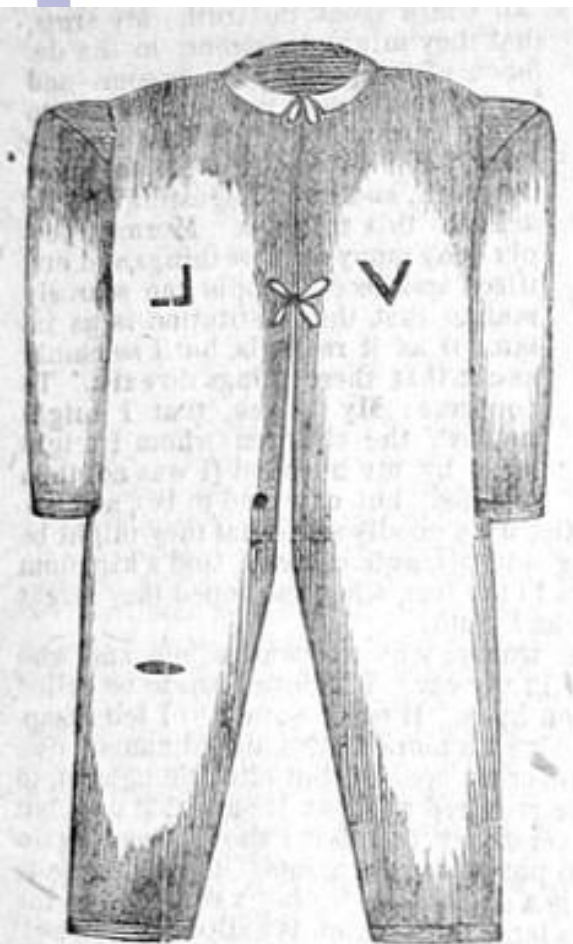


Mormons



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(NOTE: Smith was actually talking about the *original* pattern for the garments, “which God gave them” back in 1842)
(NOTE²: Prayerfully ignoring Smith's argument that any altering of God's patterns would be a “grievous sin,” the Quorum of Twelve voted to alter the patterns of the garments in 1923... which were soon amended again in the 1930s... and then again in the 1970s...)



Mormons

- ◆ So, carrying on with our six questions...
 - ◆ How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?
 - ◆ Then again, it may help to understand that to the Mormons, the Fall of Man was actually a *good* thing...
 - ◆ “Because of the Fall, we are blessed with physical bodies, the right to choose between good and evil, and the opportunity to gain eternal life. None of these privileges would have been ours had Adam and Eve remained in the garden...”
—in *Gospel Principles*
 - ◆ “Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient...”
—*Moses 5:11*

THE
DOCTRINE
AND
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PEARL OF
GREAT PRICE

Gospel Principles

*They shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer
and the very points of his doctrine, that they
may know how to come unto him and be saved.*

1 Nephi 15:14



Mormons

- ◆ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ◆ **How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 - ◆ **“If Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who oweth all things. Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy...”**
—*2 Nephi 2:22-25*

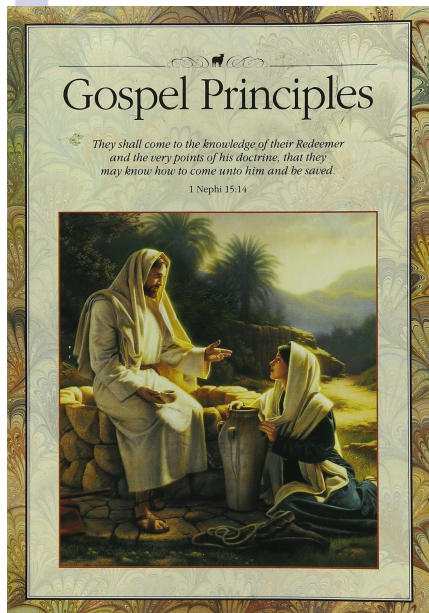
THE
BOOK
OF
MORMON

ANOTHER TESTAMENT
OF JESUS CHRIST



Mormons

- ◆ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ◆ **How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 - ◆ **“Some people believe Adam and Eve committed a serious sin when they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, latter-day scriptures help us understand that their Fall was a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us...”**
 - in *Gospel Principles*
(NOTE: “Some people believe Adam and Eve committed a serious sin”—i.e.; clearly they refer to people like Paul, who said in verses such as Romans 5:12—
“Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...”)



Mormons

- ◆ So, carrying on with our six questions...
 - ◆ How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?
 - ◆ “The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise, and was the means of furthering the purposes of the Lord in the progress of man, rather than a means of hindering them... I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin... This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin in the strict sense, for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!”

—Joseph F. Smith, in *Doctrines of Salvation*

(NOTE: Of course, in Genesis 2:17, God says, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die...”)

But Moses 3:17 clarifies that He *really* said, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, **nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it**, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die...”)

THE
DOCTRINE
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Mormons

- ♦ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ♦ **How does the group believe we are saved? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
 - ♦ **“The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise, and was the means of furthering the purposes of the Lord in the progress of man, rather than a means of hindering them...”**
 - Joseph F. Smith, in *Doctrines of Salvation*
 - ♦ **Long story short, without the Fall, mankind would still be happily living in perfect relationship with God—and thus, we would miss out on the blessing of becoming gods ourselves**

THE
BOOK
OF
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Mormons

- ♦ So, carrying on with our six questions...
 - ♦ What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?
 - ♦ “My text is on the resurrection of the dead, which you will find in the 14th chapter of John—‘In my Father’s house are many mansions.’ It *should* be—‘In my Father’s *kingdom* are many *kingdoms*,’ in order that ye may be heirs of God and joint-heirs with me... There are mansions for those who obey a celestial law, and there are other mansions for those who come short of the law, every man in his own order.”

—Joseph Smith, in *Teachings of Joseph Smith*

(NOTE: Smith's re-translation of John 14:2 isn't based on anything in the original Greek:

“In my father's *oikía* [“*oikia*”—“*house*”] are many *μοναὶ* [“*monai*”—“*abodes*” or “*rooms*” or “*dwelling-places*”]...”)

- ♦ But Smith's point is that there are multiple levels of Heaven, and that these different Heavens constitute different kingdoms for us to rule...

(NOTE: The KJV used “mansions” because they were translating the Latin Vulgate's “*mansiones*,” which just meant “*abodes*”)



Mormons

- ♦ **So, carrying on with our six questions...**
 - ♦ **What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?**
 - ♦ **“‘But,’ says one, ‘I believe in one universal heaven and hell, where all go, and are all alike, and equally miserable or equally happy.’**
“What! where all are huddled together—the honorable, virtuous, and murderers, and whoremongers, when it is written that they shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body? But St. Paul informs us of *three* glories and *three* heavens. He knew a man that was caught up to the *third* heaven.”
 - Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*
 - ♦ **Mormons regularly cite 1 Corinthians 15:39-44 to show that there are three levels of glory...**
 - ♦ **Please read 1 Corinthians 15:39-44**
 - ♦ **Mormons say, “See? The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another—three levels of splendor—so will it be with the resurrection of the dead!”**
 - ♦ **How would you respond?**



Mormons

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 - ♦ **Mormons regularly cite 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 to show that there are three levels of Heaven...**



Mormons

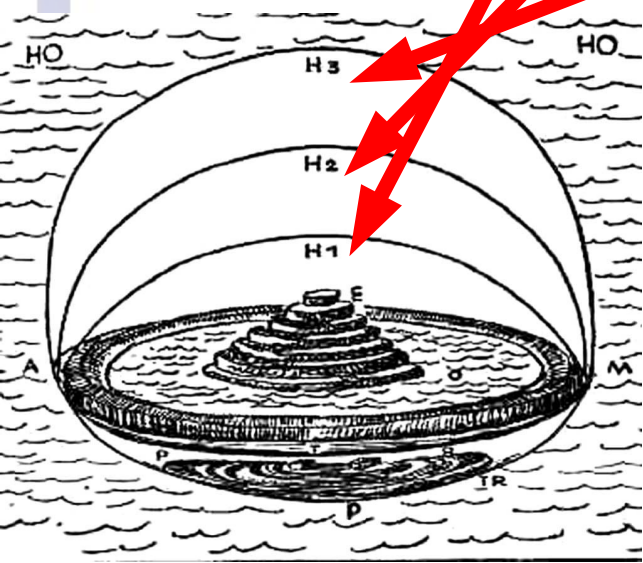


Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ In 2 Corinthians 12:2, Paul absolutely does write, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the *third heaven*...”
 - ◆ But both the Greek *οὐρανός* (“ouranos”) and the Hebrew שָׁמַיִם (“shamayim”) simply mean “sky”—just like the English “heaven” used to mean—and both cultures describe the levels of “sky” very similarly

As Genesis 1:8 explains, the first level of “sky” is that blue sky where the birds and clouds are while Genesis 1:14-16 points to a second level of “outer” sky where the sun and stars hang and Genesis 28:12, etc., describes a third and *ultimate* level of “sky” where God and His angels are (i.e.; the Heaven *above* the Heavens)

- ◆ Thus, when Paul speaks of the “third *οὐρανός*,” he isn't talking about a third level of eternal life—he's saying that the man wasn't just taken into the clouds, or up to the stars, but into Heaven itself, where God is

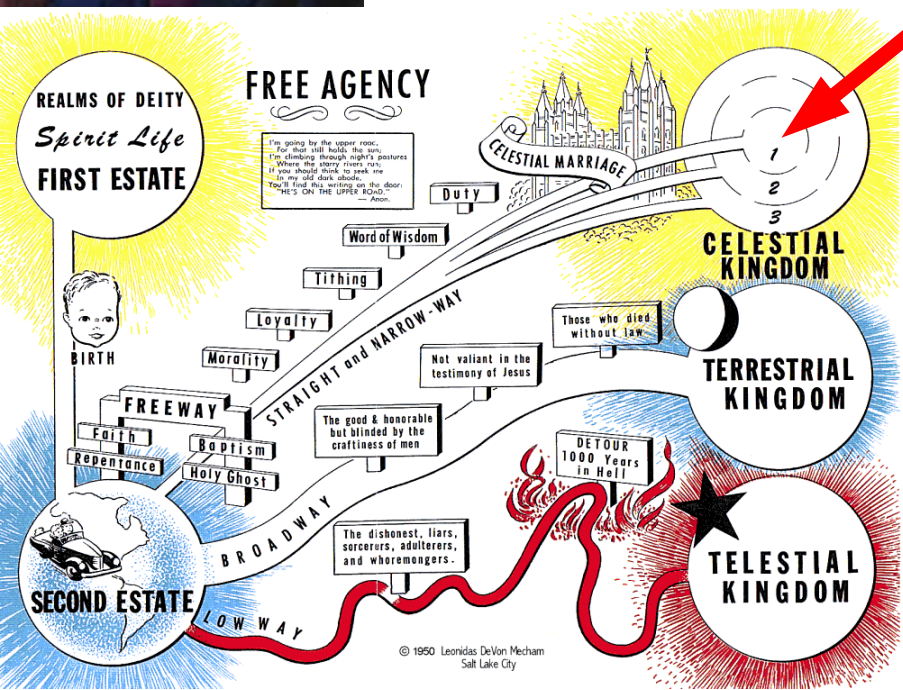


Mormons



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 - ◆ The First Estate was when we lived with God originally
 - ◆ The Second Estate is when we live here on Earth
 - ◆ The Third Estate is when we die and are resurrected to...
 - ◆ The Celestial Kingdom
 - ◆ These people will be ruling the world with God —but will be further divided into three levels —the topmost level giving men the opportunity to become gods of whole worlds themselves



(as Spencer Kimball once preached, “Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose 225,000 of you may become gods. There seems to be plenty of space out there in the universe. And the Lord has proved that he knows how to do it. I think he could make, or probably have us help make, worlds for all of us, for every one of us 225,000.”)



Mormons



Funky little teaching moment²...

- ◆ Long story short, celestial marriage isn't the same thing as civil marriage
 - ◆ Civil, earthly marriages only last as long as you live but when you're sealed *celestially*, it lasts *forever*
 - ◆ So if you want to have an *eternal* family, you'll want to get a *celestial* marriage that has been performed in the Temple
 - ◆ That way, instead of your wife and children just sitting in a lower level of the Celestial Kingdom “huddled” with everyone else, you'll all be together as one unit, eternally
 - ◆ Of course, if *everyone* did that—including *your* parents, *their* parents, *your* children, *their* children, etc.—then wouldn't everyone still be huddled together, since we're all ultimately related, if you take the logical regression back far enough?

Celestial Marriage



The most important things that any member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ever does in this world are:

1. To marry the right person in the right place, by the right authority; and
2. To keep the covenant made in connection with this holy and perfect order of matrimony - thus assuring the obedient persons of an inheritance of exaltation in the celestial kingdom. -Bruce R. McConkie



Mormons



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 - ◆ That way, instead of your wife and children just sitting in a lower level of the Celestial Kingdom “huddled” with everyone else, you'll all be together as one unit, eternally
 - ◆ Another benefit of celestial marriage being different from civil marriage is that you don't *have* to be married celestially to the same person you're married to on Earth
 - ◆ Your husband may not rate becoming a god, so you could *celestially* marry someone a lot better to make sure —or, you could *celestially* marry *several* wives to populate your planet

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Mormons



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 - ◆ So if you want to have an *eternal* family, you'll want to get a *celestial* marriage that has been performed in the Temple
 - ◆ Of course, Christians will quote verses like Luke 20:34-35 where Jesus said,
“The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage...”
 - ◆ Mormons usually reply,
“Of course—people don't *get* married or are *given* to *get* married in Heaven... which is why we need to get *sealed* in the *earthly* Temple *now*...”

Celestial Marriage



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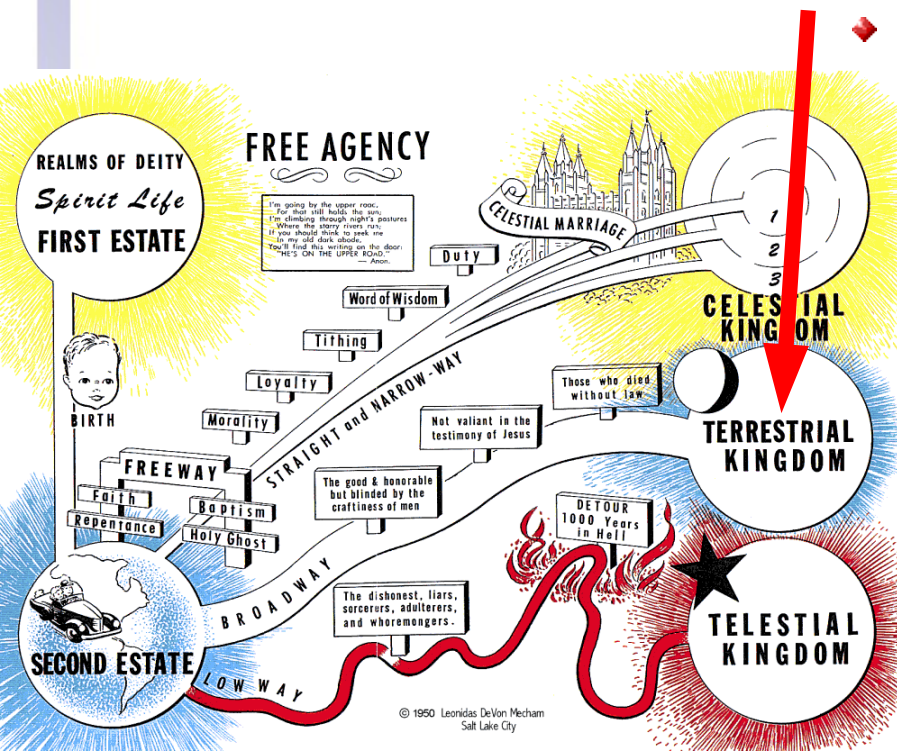
Mormons



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- ♦ But Mormons build an entire cosmology on reading this as Paul saying there are literally three Heavens
 - ♦ The First Estate was when we lived with God originally
 - ♦ The Second Estate is when we live here on Earth
 - ♦ The Third Estate is when we die and are resurrected to...
 - ♦ The Celestial Kingdom
 - ♦ The Terrestrial Kingdom

♦ “Again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn... These are they who died without law... Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men...” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:71-72,74-75)



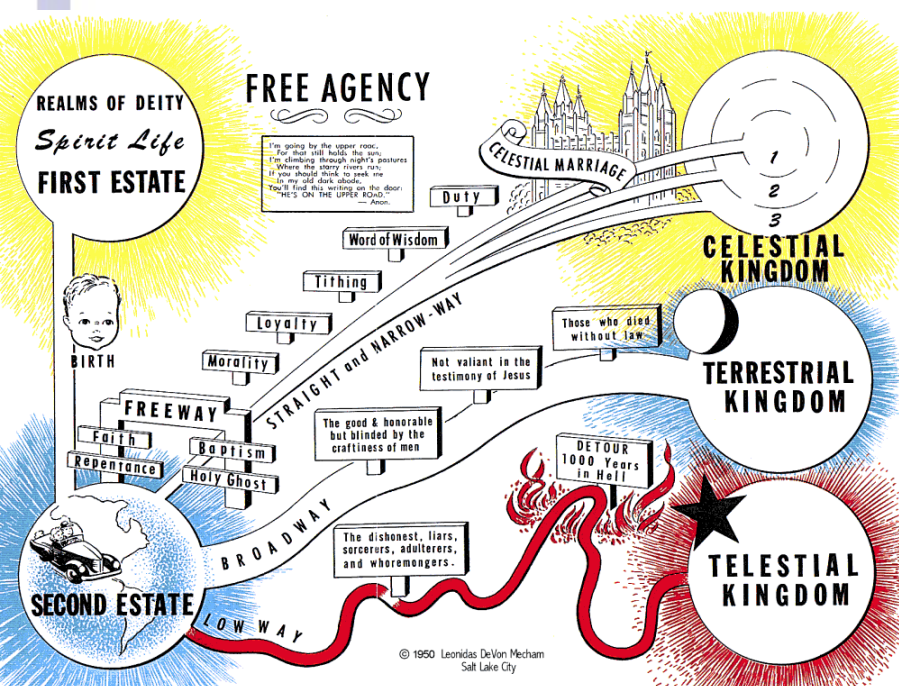
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 - ◆ The Celestial Kingdom
 - ◆ The Terrestrial Kingdom
 - ◆ These are the people whom Mormons will rule over

—like good-hearted, God-fearing, well-meaning Christians who were deceived into thinking that Mormonism is some kind of a cult or something



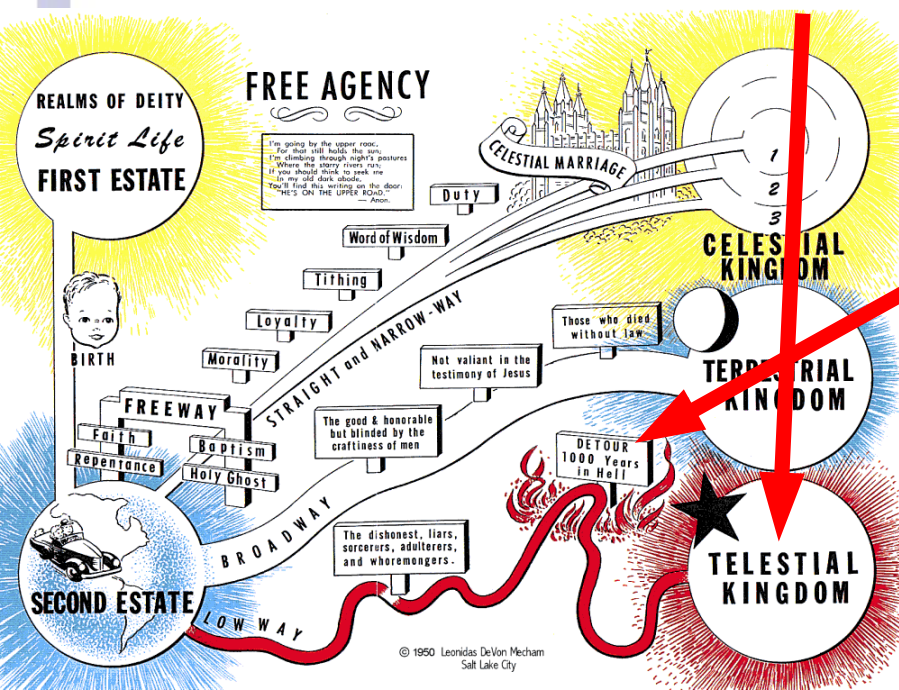
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 - ◆ The Celestial Kingdom
 - ◆ The Terrestrial Kingdom
 - ◆ The Telestial Kingdom

- ◆ These are the really bad, mostly unforgivable people who didn't believe in God at all, and lived in sin—i.e.; the dishonest, the liars, the adulterers, etc. They may have to suffer for a time in Hell, but then they will be redeemed (redeemed-*ish*) at the very end of all things, and their glory will ultimately still be better than what we have here in the Second Estate

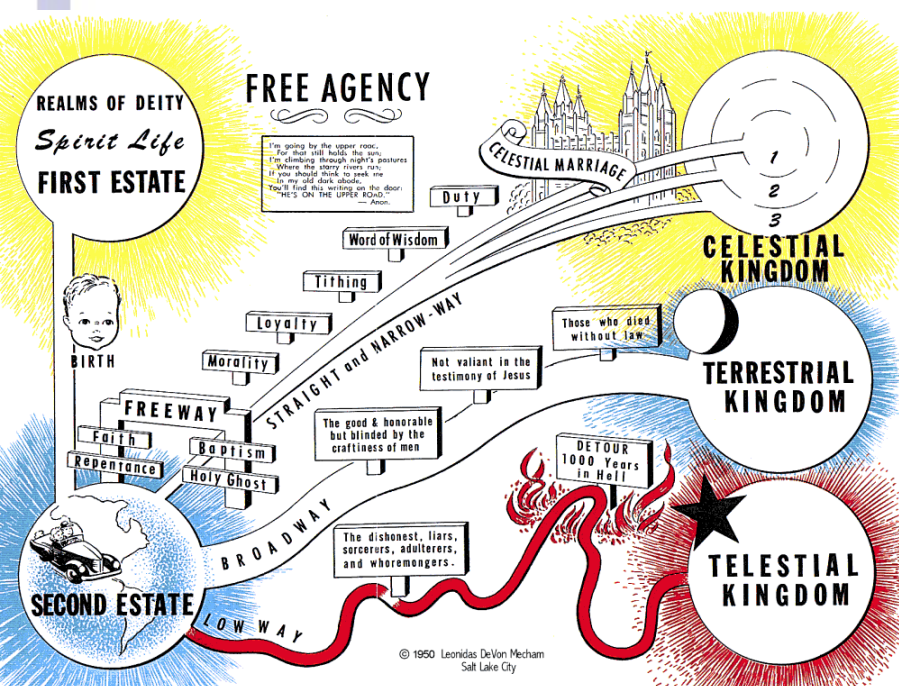


Mormons



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 - ◆ The Third Estate is when we die and are resurrected to...
 - ◆ Technically, there is a fourth level of afterlife, called “the Outer Dark” or “Perdition”
 - ◆ This is a place with *no* chance of redemption—reserved exclusively for Satan, his demons, his Christian pastors, and apostates from Mormonism (i.e.; all those who have denied or spoken against God's Holy Spirit)



Mormons

♦ Final thoughts...

- ♦ To argue effectively, we need to understand the key points of an argument, and offer undermining and refutation that creates reasonable doubt
- ♦ But remember two *absolutely crucial* elements of engaging in a loving apologetic with people—
 1. You're never *just* arguing against key doctrinal or historical points—you're also arguing against everything that a person has built their life on... which means that the better your argument, the more *emotional* resistance you'll run into from the people you're trying to reach, because you're cracking their whole world apart
 2. If you actually do succeed, by God's grace, in helping someone realize that everything they've built their life around is wrong, then you've left them with nothing but an empty hole in their life—so be conscientious, and empathetically grieve with them... but then help them to fill that hole with God's *actual* **I**truth...

THE
HOLY BIBLE

