

The Troubling Doctrines of Mormonism, Part 2

By Graham Osborne

In my last article, I looked at Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, detailing his marginal background and inconsistencies within the Book of Mormon and other allegedly divinely inspired writings. And while these are all deeply concerning issues, it is the weightier doctrinal teachings of Mormonism that reveal the darker side of what many see as simply a clean cut, family-friendly Protestant denomination.

While there are many areas we could address here – the reversal of earlier teachings on the necessity of polygamy for salvation, the allowance of abortion in many situations, the claim to have prophets in direct contact with God (but that have historically and repeatedly contradicted each other in major doctrinal reversals), the Masonic parallels in the secret Mormon temple ceremonies which reveal secrets supposedly necessary for eternal salvation, the belief in the eternal nature of matter (matter is uncreated, always having existed), and countless other strange teachings – I will focus on one particularly troubling doctrinal area.

Mormonism teaches that God the Father was once a man just like us, but with time, became an exalted man with a glorified – but flesh and bones – body, and now rules the earth from his own planet, Kolob. Joseph Smith wrote that, “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens”. “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's”, Mormon's Doctrines and Covenants 130:22 continues.

Mormon teaching also declares that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are actually *separate gods*, distinct from God the Father – essentially a doctrine of multiple gods.

But the strangeness does not end there, as Mormon doctrine stunningly goes on to proclaim that each person can potentially become a god, ruling over their own world just as God the Father does now! “You have got to learn how to be gods yourselves... the same as all gods have done before you”, Joseph Smith would write.

Mormonism's second “prophet”, Brigham Young, who succeeded immediately after Smith, taught that the number of gods and worlds can't be known, and that the process of men becoming gods goes on eternally. Similarly, Mormon prophet, Lorenzo Snow, summarized this teaching, known as “eternal progression”, saying: “As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be”. Sobering.

At its heart, Mormonism plummets believers right back to the original deception of the devil in the Garden: *you* can be like God (cf. Genesis 3:1-14). But not just “like” God – you can actually become a god! The Pharisees accused Jesus of

blasphemy for exactly the same claim. This is profoundly serious stuff, and many simply fail to grasp the distinctly demonic dimension of this belief.

A brief Scriptural response to these heretical Mormon teachings could include, “The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Mark 12:29, Deuteronomy 6:4), and that “God is spirit” (John 4:24) – and in Jesus’ own words, “a spirit does not have flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39). 1 Timothy 1:17 also confirms that God is “immortal, invisible, the *only* God”.

The prophet Isaiah summarizes things well for us: “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me ... I am the First and I am the Last; besides me *there is no god* ... For I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, 45:24). John 1:1 then gives us additional orthodox insight into this doctrine, relating that, “In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

But the point is, that Mormonism has a deeply confused view of God that spirals into radical polytheism. It clearly denies the fundamental Christian doctrine of the Trinity – three divine persons in *one* God – and instead, preaches an infinite number of separate gods.

Because of this, and many other total departures from orthodox Christian beliefs, Mormonism is not actually considered a Christian denomination, and Mormon baptism is not recognized by the Catholic Church.

Christians baptize “in *THE* (singular) name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19), acknowledging one God in three divine persons. But disturbingly, Mormons invoke three “gods” in their baptismal formula. While they may use the words, “Father”, “Son”, and, “Holy Spirit”, what they mean by those words is completely opposed to the Christian understanding of these terms.

Other bizarre teachings include Jesus and Lucifer being “spirit brothers”, and that God the Father had physical, sexual relations with Mary to generate their “spirit child”, Jesus. Mormons still maintain that Mary remained a virgin though, defining a virgin as someone who has had no relations with a *man*. God the Father is a god now, so this activity, technically, did not lead to a loss of Mary’s virginity. Incredible!

Reflecting on all these troubling teachings, Mormonism essentially represents a “new gospel”. There is absolutely zero evidence for any of these strange doctrines in either the Old or New Testament – or in the writings of the Early Church. Mormonism and Christianity stand directly opposed to each other, and they both can’t be true. And here lies the problem.

While some might argue that Mormons promote good family values, and have done many good, charitable works throughout the world, Mormonism leads people

away from true Christianity with false teachings that strike at the heart of who God is, and then blasphemously insists that we can become gods ourselves – and be worshipped!

Smith also insisted that *all* Christian churches had apostacized, including the Catholic Church. This is a serious charge against the true Church Jesus founded. In fact, Smith's whole rationale behind founding Mormonism was to restore Christianity to the world after what he believed was centuries of absence. The existence of Mormonism completely hinges on their belief that the Church Jesus founded fell away. If this did not happen, then their founder, Joseph Smith's "mission" is misguided at best (and demonic at worst), and the establishing of his church absolutely unnecessary. "*If the alleged apostasy of the primitive Church was not a reality, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the divine institution its name proclaims*", writes Mormon apologist, James E. Talmadge, in *The Great Apostasy*.

Problem is, Smith's new Christianity looked nothing like the original. Considering Smith's claims of receiving revelations from an angel directing him to restore both the true Christian church and "the fullness of the gospel" to Earth, and given the fact that many of Smith's key teachings are radically different from the original teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, one can't help recall St. Paul's warning in Galatians 1:18: "if ... an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed."

This also brings to mind Smith's very first vision where he was engulfed in a terrifying darkness that gave way to a "brilliant pillar of light". "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light", St. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 11:14.

Now many Mormons are simply unaware of this backdrop, and so we must always try to point out the true gospel to them as charitably as possible. But no one should underestimate the profoundly dangerous teachings that Mormons – wittingly or not – so enthusiastically try to spread. They are spiritually deadly to the soul of a Christian. At stake here is not simply doctrinal disagreement or confusion (serious in itself), but a radical departure from the truths Jesus left us.

Interestingly, over time, Smith would give various, disparate versions of his original visions, casting further doubt on their veracity. And Scripture does not take false prophets lightly ...