

# Temples and Temple Ordinances

by Marvin Cowan

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*The LDS Church believes that temples and temple ordinances are necessary for salvation and exaltation in the Kingdom of God, but these practices are not supported by the Bible.*

**Topics:** "Lds Temples", "Mormon Ordinances"

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## Description

Marvin Cowan preaches about the LDS belief in salvation through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, particularly focusing on the significance of temples in Mormonism. He delves into the history and teachings surrounding temples, temple ordinances, and the practice of baptism for the dead, highlighting the LDS perspective on these practices as essential for salvation and exaltation. The sermon also addresses the controversial topic of polygamy within Mormonism, exploring the historical context and doctrinal beliefs surrounding this practice. Additionally, the sermon touches on the concept of temple endowments, marriage and sealing ceremonies, and the genealogical work done by Mormons in preparation for temple ordinances.

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## Transcript

"We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel."

3rd Article of Faith by Joseph Smith

### TEMPLES

Some of the "ordinances" required for LDS individual or personal salvation can only be performed in temples. Mormons believe that temples and temple ordinances were among the great truths that Joseph Smith restored to the church and they take great pride in being a "temple building people."

LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie explained that a temple is "...a House of the Lord... where he and his Spirit may dwell... From the days of Adam to the present, whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth, temples and temple ordinances have been a crowning feature of their worship. 'My people are always commanded to build temples,' the Lord says, 'for the glory, honor, and endowment' of all the saints (D. & C. 124:39-40) ...But in the days of poverty, or when the number of true believers has been too small, the Lord has used mountains, groves, and wilderness locations for temple purposes" (M.D. p. 780). LDS Apostle Franklin D. Richards added, "The temples, the houses of our God, when acceptably dedicated,

become to us the gates of heaven" (J. of D., Vol. 25, p. 231).

LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie also declared, "Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (known informally by the nickname Mormons) believe the Bible. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible that it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: 'If all men believed the Bible, all would be Mormons.' Bible doctrine is Mormon doctrine and Mormon doctrine is Bible doctrine. They are one and the same" (What the Mormons Think of Christ, p. 3).

Therefore, temples and temple ordinances from "Adam to the present" should be found in the Bible if LDS beliefs and practice conform "literally and completely" to it. But until God revealed the design and use of the tabernacle to Moses in Ex. 25-40, neither tabernacles nor temples were even mentioned! Instructions to Moses for the tabernacle would have been unnecessary if temples were already in use. If "whenever the Lord had a people on the earth, temples and temple ordinances" were part of their worship, no one from Adam to Moses belonged to the Lord!

The first time the word "temple" is used in the Bible is in I Sam. 1:9, where it refers to the portable tabernacle Israel received through Moses. The first permanent temple was built by King Solomon about 1,000 years before Christ (I Kings 6:17).

Apostle McConkie said a temple is a "House of the Lord... where he and his Spirit may dwell." But, Solomon questioned, "Who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build Him an house, save only to burn sacrifices before Him (II Chron. 2:6)? At the temple dedication, Solomon prayed, "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heaven cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built" (II Chron. 6:12)! He also prayed, "...hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place..." (I Kings 8:30).

When King Hezekiah later restored the temple, "...the priests and Levites arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven (II Chron. 30:27). Just before Stephen was killed, he said, "But Solomon built Him (God) an house. Nevertheless, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will ye build me? Saith the Lord. Or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things" (Acts 7:47-50)?

Paul also declared, "God, who made the world and all things in it, seeing that is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). The book of Hebrews explains, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man... But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:11-12; 24).

Since God does not dwell in temples made with men's hands, temples cannot be the "gate" to His kingdom as LDS leaders have taught. Here on earth, God dwells in a "temple" built by the Lord Himself known as the Church or the Body of Christ (I Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22). He also indwells the physical bodies of believers in Christ which are called temples of God (I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:16).

Regardless of what the Bible says, Mormons continue to build elaborate and expensive temples all over the world where they can perform saving ordinances for both the living and the dead.

For most Mormons, their first visit to the temple takes place when they go on a mission or when they get married for eternity or have their marriage "solemnized." But, in order to enter the temple, they must have a "temple recommend" which is signed by both the ward bishop and the stake president. In order to get that recommend they are personally questioned on the following issues: 1) moral cleanness; 2) sustaining the General Authorities of the LDS Church and whether they have sympathized with any apostates or their teachings; 3) paying a full tithe; 4) keeping the Word of Wisdom; 5) wearing the regulation undergarments (if they have previously been to the temple); 6) striving to attend services regularly and obeying the rules, laws and commandments of the gospel; 7) reporting if ever denied a recommend; 8) reporting if ever divorced. If all of these things are in order, they are given a temple recommend that serves as a ticket to enter the temple.

Those who are going to the temple to do proxy work for their dead relatives must first do the genealogical work necessary to identify those for whom the work will be done.

### Genealogical Work

President Joseph Fielding Smith says, "Then it is his duty to seek his record as far back as he can go and do the same thing for each unit. He should begin with his father and mother and their children, and his grandfather and his children, great-grandfather and his children, and have the work done in like manner, linking each generation with the one that goes before. That is the responsibility resting upon every man who is the head of a household in this church" (D. of S., Vol. II, pp. 206-207).

Joseph Smith also declared, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" (T. of P.J.S., p. 356). He also said, "Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation" (Ibid., p. 193).

Thus, the LDS Church operates the most sophisticated "family history" genealogical library in the world. Microfilms of these genealogical records are kept in large tunnels drilled in a granite mountain southeast of Salt Lake City in Little Cottonwood Canyon. President Joseph Fielding Smith said of this work for the dead, "We cannot do it all at once, but will have the 1,000 years of the millennium to do it in. In that time the work must be done in behalf of the dead of the previous 6,000 years, for all who need it" (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 166).

Smith continued, "Those who will be living here then will be in daily communication with those who have passed through the resurrection, and they will come with this information, this knowledge that we do not have and will give it to those in mortality saying, 'now go into the temples and do this work; when you get this done, we will bring you other names' (Ibid., p. 167).

Thus, devout Mormons search for their genealogical records, and then do temple work for their dead relatives. They believe they will complete that work during the millennium. Because of the possibility of duplicating work for the dead, LDS were told "one year must elapse after the death of an individual before any temple ordinance may be performed" (Deseret News, "Church News," January 7, 1967, p. 14). Zealous Mormons are performing millions of proxy ordinances or "endowments" for dead relatives every year. But the Bible warns, "Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, and contentions, and striving about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (I Tim. 1:4; Titus 3:9).

## TEMPLE ENDOWMENTS

LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie says temples are "holy sanctuaries wherein sacred ordinances, rites, and ceremonies are performed which pertain to salvation and exaltation in the Kingdom of God... (M.D., pp. 779).

### Marriage and Sealing

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "Now the duty of a man in his own family is to see that he and his wife are sealed at the altar. If married out in the world before they joined the church, or if they have been in the church and have been unable to go to the temple, it is that man's duty to go to the temple, have his wife sealed to him and have their children sealed, so that the family group, that unit to which he belongs, is made intact so that it will continue throughout eternity. That is the first duty that man owes to himself, to his wife and to his children. He receives this blessing by virtue of the priesthood" (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 206).

Concerning celestial marriage in the temple, Apostle John Widtsoe wrote, "Several approaches to eternal marriage may be made: Two living persons may be sealed to each other for time and eternity. A living man may be sealed for eternity to a dead woman; or a living woman to a dead man. Two dead persons may be sealed to each other. It is also possible, though the church does not now permit it, to seal two living people for eternity only, with no association on earth... Further, under divine command to the Prophet Joseph Smith, it was possible for one man to be sealed to more than one woman for time and for eternity. Thus, came plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints" (E. & R., p. 340). While polygamy in this life is not being practiced by most Mormons today, many LDS men are sealed to more than one wife for all eternity in the manner just described.

Failure to marry in an LDS temple will "damn" a person so that his eternal progression will be stopped short of godhood. The best that he can hope for then is to be an angel (see D. & C. 132:16-20; see also the pamphlet About Mormonism by Apostle Stephen L. Richards, p. 12).

When he arrives at the temple, the "temple recommend" is checked to see if it is in proper order. He then goes to the washing and anointing room where the endowment ceremony begins. Ladies go to a separate but similar room. All clothing is removed and put in a private locker. They then put on a "shield" which looks something like a white sheet folded in half with a hole in the middle for the head to fit through. This hangs loosely over the front and back, leaving the sides exposed. A temple worker of the same sex then puts his or her right hand under running water and washes the applicant's body. Each part of the body is touched as it is mentioned in the ceremony being recited, including the head, ears, eyes, nose, lips, neck, shoulders, back, breast, vitals and bowels, arms and hands, loins, legs and feet. The washing is "confirmed" with a brief ceremony, and the person goes to another booth where the same body parts are anointed with oil. That is followed by a ceremony confirming the anointing.

They then put on the "authorized pattern" undergarment with another ceremony. This is the garment devout Mormon men and women wear nearly all of the time - day and night, summer and winter. They are told it will be a shield and protection against the power of the destroyer until their work on earth is completed. Many Mormons have testified of physical and spiritual protection by wearing the garment. Non-Mormons (Gentiles) sometimes refer to this garment as "Mormon armor" or "bullet-proof underwear" because of the dramatic stories Mormons tell about its protective power. The original undergarment was full length with a large collar, but dress styles have changed and the garment has been greatly abbreviated. However, President Joseph F. Smith said:

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 (Improvement Era, 9:813, August, 1906).

Apparently, LDS leaders did not have the "moral courage to stand against the opinions of fashion," because the undergarment has been altered considerably! But, even the shortest will not fit under a bikini swim suit, so many Mormons now take them off while swimming, competing in sports and so on. In years past, devout Mormons insisted that their garments be in contact with their bodies at all times. Even while bathing or changing the garment, they stood or sat on it so that they would be in contact with its protective power.

After putting on the undergarment for the first time in the temple, each temple patron is given a "new name." He then goes back to his locker and removes the "shield," and he puts on the white temple clothes he rented or purchased. For a man these include shirt, pants, belt, socks, tie, and moccasins. Later he will put on a green "fig leaf" apron and white robe and cap. After the woman has put on her undergarment, she takes off her shield and puts on a white slip, dress, hose, and moccasins. Later she also puts on a green "fig leaf" apron and a white robe and veil.

When they are dressed, they join several others in the Creation Room which has beautiful pictures depicting the creation of the world. There they listen to Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael discuss the creation of the world. They then follow "Adam and Eve" into the "Garden of Eden" room. In LDS temples built after the 1960's, participants go to an assembly room where scenes of creation are projected on a large screen. This is followed by scenes of the Garden of Eden, then Telestial scenes and finally Terrestrial scenes. With each different scene, participants see actors acting out LDS theology and they participate as a leader directs them. They also learn four special hand grips necessary for entrance into the celestial kingdom.

There are three vows in the endowment ceremony which were very similar until 1990. The first said, "I (Jacob, or whatever new name was just given) covenant and promise that I will never reveal the first token of the Aaronic Priesthood, together with its accompanying name, sign and penalty. Rather than do so I would suffer my life to be taken."

As this vow was taken, the thumb of the right hand was placed below the left ear and drawn quickly across the throat, indicating the type of death implied in the oath. With the other two vows, the motion was made across the breast and across the bowels respectively. But, in 1990, the word "penalty" along with the last sentence of the three oaths were deleted. The symbolic motions made with the hands were also discontinued.

Until 1990, while participants viewed "Telestial" scenes representing the lowest heaven, they learned that preachers were employed by Lucifer and were in the ministry for the money! This has also now been deleted. While viewing "Terrestrial" scenes they take vows of chastity and consecration. Then, everyone goes to stand before the veil which will give them entrance into the "Celestial Room" representing the highest heaven. Until 1990, in order to gain entrance, participants had to give the "five points of fellowship"

to someone behind the veil. The five points were: 1) inside of right foot by the side of right foot, 2) knee to knee, 3) breast to breast, 4) hand to back, and 5) mouth to ear. The five points of fellowship are no longer used. But, only when the new name is whispered through the veil and the proper handshake (sure sign of the nail) is given, can they pass through the veil into the Celestial Room. After these endowments the couple can be married or sealed for all eternity in one of several "sealing rooms" in the temple.

Devout Mormons do not talk about the temple rites because they covenant not to do so as they go through the temple rites. Until 1990, they swore an oath on penalty of death not to talk about it! The LDS Church does not publish the ceremony because it is too sacred to be seen by Gentiles (non-Mormons). But, several former Mormons who memorized it have written it while others have tape recorded it. The Temple ceremony has undergone many changes since it was introduced, but Robert L. Millet, dean of Religious Education at BYU declared in the July 1996 Ensign p. 51, "The gospel based covenants we make and ordinances we receive are likewise eternal and unchanging."

Even though LDS claim that Mormonism is a restoration of New Testament doctrines and practice, there is no record in the Bible or elsewhere showing that Jesus or His disciples ever participated in temple rites like the LDS. The Bible records only one wedding where Jesus was present and that was in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11) where there was no temple!

Temple ceremonies were never part of Christ's gospel, but they are a part of the LDS gospel, so those who teach and practice them fall under the condemnation of Gal. 1:8-9. Furthermore, LDS claim the B. of M. is the "fulness of the gospel" (D. & C. 20:9, 27:5), but it says nothing about temple rites. In fact, the B. of M. says, "The Lord worketh not in secret combinations" (Ether 8:19). But, LDS temple rites are secret from all but devout Mormons. Jesus said, "in secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20). Jesus never participated in or performed temple rites like the LDS have. Thus, if LDS are actually following the Lord's example as they claim, there should be no secret temple rites. Such rites even exclude non-LDS parents from attending the wedding of a son or daughter who has joined the LDS Church. Yet, the LDS Church claims that it has a wonderful family program!

## POLYGAMY

Although most Mormons do not practice polygamy today, an estimated 30,000 or more "fundamentalist Mormons" are involved in it (Ladies Home Journal, June, 1967; and Utah Holiday Magazine, May, 1986). Several obituaries in Salt Lake newspapers during the 1990's have reported numerous wives and children when a man died. Many devout Mormons admit they believe in polygamy but are not practicing it because of the Woodruff Manifesto now known as Official Declaration-1 at the end of the D. & C. But, many of those same LDS men are sealed for all eternity to two or more wives in LDS temple rites in the manner described earlier by Apostle John Widtsoe. That is one reason that polygamy is discussed under the heading of "Temples and Temple Ordinances." A popular Mormon writer, John J. Stewart, says, "The Church has never, and certainly will never renounce this doctrine. The revelation on plural marriage is still an integral part of LDS scripture, and always will be" (Brigham Young and His Wives, p. 14). He was referring to the current edition of the D. & C., Section 132.

LDS Apostle John Widtsoe explains the reason for polygamy stating, "In the spirit world are countless numbers of spirits waiting for their descent into mortality, to secure earth bodies as a means of further progress. These unborn spirits desired the best possible parentage. Those assuming plural marriage almost invariably were the finest types in the community" (E. & R., p. 393).

President Heber Kimball also declared, "I have noticed that a man who has but one wife, and is inclined to that doctrine, soon begins to wither and dry up, while a man who goes into plurality looks fresh, young and sprightly" (J. of D., Vol. V, p.22).

President Brigham Young also said, "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter polygamy" (J. of D., Vol. XI, p. 269). Later Young also said, "I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call it scripture" (J. of D., Vol. XIII, p. 95). Thus, polygamy was such an important doctrine that the first seven LDS Presidents or Prophets practiced it (Brigham Young and His Wives, p. 22). President Joseph F. Smith said, "No man can be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God without the woman, and no woman can reach the perfection and exaltation in the kingdom of God alone" (G.D., p. 341).

Brigham Young also said, "As no man can be perfect without the woman, so no woman can be perfect without the man to lead her, I tell you the truth as it is in the bosom of eternity; and I say so to every man upon the face of the earth: if he wishes to be saved he cannot be saved without a woman by his side" (Times and Seasons, 6:955, April 6, 1845).

However, President Heber C. Kimball seems to contradict President Young by saying, "Supposing that I have a wife or a dozen of them, and she should say 'you cannot be exalted with me,' and suppose they all should say so, what of that? They never will affect my salvation one particle. Whose salvation will they affect? Their own" (J. of D., Vol. IV, p. 209). He elaborates further, saying:

In the spirit world there is an increase of males and females, there are millions of them, and if I am faithful all the time, and continue right along with brother Brigham [Young], we will go to brother Joseph [Smith] and say, 'Here we are brother Joseph; we are here ourselves are we not, with none of the property we possessed in our probationary state, not even the rings on our fingers?' He will say to us, 'Come along, my boys, we will give you a good suit of clothes. Where are your wives?' 'They are back yonder; they would not follow us.' 'Never mind' says Joseph, 'here are thousands, have all you want.' (Ibid., p. 209).

But, Jesus declared, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30). Even Mormonism teaches that angels are unmarried in D. & C. 132:16-17. So if men are not married and cannot get married in heaven, but are like the angels, how can there be marriage in the resurrected life? Christians will then be "married" to Christ according to Rom. 7:4 and Rev. 19:7-8, but that marriage union is very different from what LDS teach.

Joseph Smith declared, "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is they will not have any children after the resurrection" (D.H.C., Vol. V, p. 391). This is called the "new and everlasting covenant" (D. & C. 132:4). Since Mormon leaders claim that God, Adam, the patriarchs, David, Solomon, Moses, and even Christ lived this covenant, one wonders what is "new" about it? (The Seer, pp. 158-159, 172; J. of D., Vol. I, p. 50; G.T.A., pp. 118-119.) Furthermore, many LDS have had their "eternal marriages" annulled or canceled, so they weren't eternal either! And, even the words "new" and "everlasting" contradict each other!

The Bible not only contradicts eternal marriage, but also plural marriage. Many men in the Old Testament had more than one wife, but God never commanded plural marriage. God always spoke of man's "wife," not wives (Gen. 2:18, 22-23; Matt. 19:5-6; Eph. 5:31; I Cor. 7:2; Deut. 17:17; I Tim. 3:2, 12).

## BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

The reason Mormons do genealogical studies is so they can do proxy baptism, sealings, ordinations, endowments and marriages in the temple for the their dead relatives to help exalt or save them. LDS use I Cor. 15:29 to try to show that their concept of proxy baptism is Biblical. It says, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Paul's main subject in I Cor. 15 was not baptism for the dead but "resurrection of the body." He was not giving a commandment to baptize by proxy in verse 29, but he was arguing for a belief in the resurrection of the body. History indicates that there were sects which practiced baptism for the dead. Paul may be referring to them when he said, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead?" But notice the change in pronouns in the next verse: "and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" Notice "they" are baptizing for the dead and "we" are standing in jeopardy. Paul does not include himself nor any Christian with those who were baptizing for the dead! Paul simply questions, "Why are they doing it if there is no resurrection? Their act indicates they believe in a resurrection, just like when jeopardizing our lives for the gospel shows that we believe in the resurrection." LDS often misquote I Cor. 15:29 saying: "Else what shall we do who are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are we then baptized for the dead?" But, that is not what the text says!

The LDS doctrine of baptism for the dead actually comes from D. & C. 124:29- 39; 127:5-7; 128:1-3, 17-18. President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

If a man cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism, then the dead must be baptized. But how can they be baptized in water for the remission of their sins? It is easy to understand how they in person could believe in Christ and even obtain the spirit of repentance; but water is an element of this world, and how could spirits be baptized in it, or receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost? The only way it can be done is vicariously, someone who is living acting as a substitute for the dead (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 141).

Concerning this subject, President Wilford Woodruff said:

I look upon this portion of our ministry as a mission of as much importance as preaching to the living; the dead will hear the voice of the servants of God in the spirit-world, and they cannot come forth in the morning of the resurrection, unless certain ordinances are performed for and in their behalf in temples built to the name of God. It takes just as much to save a dead man as a living man. For the last eighteen hundred years, the people that have lived and passed away never heard the voice of an inspired man, never heard a gospel sermon until they entered the spirit-world. Somebody has got to redeem them, by performing such ordinances for them in the flesh as they cannot attend to themselves in the spirit, and in order that this work may be done, we must have temples in which to do it; and what I wish to say to you, my brethren and sisters, is that the God of heaven requires us to rise up and build them, that the work of redemption may be hastened.... I will here say, before closing that two weeks before I left St. George (Utah), the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, 'you have had the use of the endowment house for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God.' These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence and they waited on me for two days and two nights.... I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I

then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them (J. of D., Vol. XIX, pp. 228-229).

However, Psalm 49:7 declares, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Furthermore, I Pet. 1:18 says we are "not redeemed with corruptible things." Are man-made temples corruptible? Is water corruptible? Are men who stand proxy for the dead corruptible? If these things are corruptible, no one can be redeemed by them. Men are redeemed only by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:18-19).

Mormonism says baptism is essential to salvation and spirits cannot be baptized in water, so proxy work is required to save them. But, the B. of M. teaches that the three transfigured Nephite disciples who never died baptized mortals (B. of M. III Nephi 28:18). Would it be any more difficult for a mortal to baptize a spirit than it was for the Spirit of the Lord to baptize Adam (P. of G.P. Moses 6:64-65)? And why could not the Spirit of the Lord baptize spirits if He could baptize a mortal? Furthermore, President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "They who go into the spirit world, who hold the priesthood of God, teach the dead the everlasting gospel in that spirit world; and when the dead are willing to repent and receive those teachings, and the work is done for them here vicariously, they shall have the privilege of coming out of the prison house to find their place in the kingdom of God" (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 135). Was the LDS "priesthood authority" for baptism, ordination, marriage and so on lost when they died? According to Smith, the only thing the LDS preachers do in the spirit world is preach, while LDS mortals on earth preach, baptize, ordain, marry, and so on. Is this "eternal progression?" Why is LDS proxy baptism for the dead so important anyway since the B. of M. says, "For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such, baptism availeth nothing but is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of His Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works" (Moroni 8:22-23). For further information on this text see our section entitled Baptism in the chapter on "Salvation."

Joseph Fielding Smith said that the "faith alone doctrine denies justice of God" (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 140). And Talmage calls justification by faith a "pernicious doctrine" and a "sectarian dogma" (A. of F., pp. 107, 480). LDS believe that they can do proxy work for the dead which the dead can accept by faith in the spirit world after death (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 135). But, when Christ offers eternal life by grace through faith to believers here on earth (Eph. 2:8-9), the LDS reject it, saying that it is too easy and they must work for their own salvation. The Bible warns that the "god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them (II Cor. 4:4).

Talmage said that we can become "vicarious saviors" of the dead (A. of F., p. 152). But, if that is true, Jesus Christ is not the only mediator between God and men as I Tim. 2:5 declares. Furthermore, Heb. 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." And, II Cor. 6:2 declares, "Behold now is the accepted time: Behold now is the day of salvation." The Bible nowhere teaches that mankind has another chance for salvation after death.

LDS use I Peter 3:19-20 to support their doctrine of salvation for the dead. It says Christ "preached unto the spirits in prison," but it does not say that He preached the gospel to them as LDS claim. Nor does the text say any spirits were saved as a result of that preaching or that anyone was baptized in their behalf. Such an interpretation ignores the context which indicates that Christ's preaching was a proclamation of

judgment. Mormons also use I Peter 4:6 to teach salvation for the dead. It says, "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead." Notice the tense of the verbs: it says the gospel was preached to men when they were alive, but they are now dead. But, LDS use this text to teach that the gospel will be preached to the dead who died without the law. The B. of M. says that is a "mockery" and "dead works" (Moroni 8:22-23). On the other hand, those who did have the law and rejected it, should not have proxy work done for them according to President Joseph Fielding Smith. He said, "The work for the dead is not intended for those who had every opportunity to receive it, who had it taught to them, and who then refused to receive it, or had not interest enough to attend to these ordinances when they were living (D. of S., Vol. II, p. 184).

If baptism is not needed by those without the law as the B. of M. says, and proxy temple work "is not intended for those who had every opportunity to receive" the LDS gospel but refused it as Joseph Fielding Smith said, then for whom are LDS doing proxy work? Mormon missionaries who "compass sea and land to make one proselyte" (Matt. 23:15) are also wasting their time if they go to people "without the law," since the B. of M. says those people are already "alive in Christ," (Moroni 8:22).

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