

The Law of Eternal Progression

PLANET NEAR
Star: KOLOS
God: ELOHIM
Heavenly MOTHER
Spirit: CHILDREN
Jesus and BROTHER
SISTER

Where did we come from? MARRIED
WORTHY

Why are we here?

1. RECEIVE A BODY
2. EXPERIENCE SIN
3. FAITH IN CHRIST
4. REPENTANCE
5. BAPTISM
6. RECEIVE Holy Ghost
7. OBEY LAWS of GOSPEL
8. BECOME TEMPLE WORTHY
9. TEMPLE ORDINANCE

1st Estate

PRE EXISTANCE

CELESTIAL

TERRESTRIAL

JEW
CHRISTIAN
ISLAM

Where are we going?

PARADISE

SPIRIT PRISON

OUTER DARKNESS

TELESTIAL

2ND ESTATE

The Three Questions

Where Did We Come From?

Latter-day Saint Teaching

Before birth on this earth, we were born to Heavenly Father and Heavenly mother as spirit persons. "All men and women are... literally the sons and daughters of Diety (*sic*)....Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal [physical] body."¹ In the pre-earth life, we all chose to follow God or Satan.

Biblical Teaching

The Bible teaches that God created humans, not procreated them (Gen. 1:27, 5:1, Deut. 4:32, Ps. 104:30, Isa. 45:12). This is true of the physical body *and* the soul. "God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). Hence, Adam was not a living soul until he was created on earth.

The word "formed" above is the same word found in Zechariah 12:1: "[The LORD] formeth the spirit of man within him." It means to make or fashion. Just as Adam's physical body did not

exist before being formed, his spirit did not have a previous existence before being formed.

God is not called "Father" in the sense of procreation. Instead, God's people call Him "Father" in the sense of adoption (Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:5, Eph. 1:5). John 1:12 says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name." If God gives a person power to become His son, then that person is not His son naturally.

The LDS often use Jeremiah 1:5 to show that humans existed before birth; "...before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." This does not demonstrate Jeremiah's pre-existence. Romans 9:10-13 reveals that God chose Jacob over Esau before their birth. But, his choice was not due to Jacob's pre-birth goodness. Paul explains that God chose them before they were born, hence, they had not "done any good or evil" (11). These verses indicate God's work in calling a person, not human achievement before birth.

Why Are We Here?

Latter-day Saint Teaching

"This earth is a place where people are given the opportunity to learn, to prove themselves, and to develop the characteristics of Heavenly Father."² God "proves" his children by giving them commandments; "We are tested in mortality to show whether or not we will keep God's commandments and overcome sin and opposition."³ After one receives and lives God's commandments, eternal life is obtained.⁴

Biblical Teaching

The Bible teaches that we are here to seek God's glory. 1 Corinthians 10:31 instructs: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." While the Latter-day Saint would see God's glory as important, the focus of this

earth life is to seek self exaltation.

Romans 11:36 says, "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen." Hence, the purpose for our existence is found in the person of God. He not only created us, but he created us for Himself. He did not create us to achieve His status. (See also Prov. 16:4, Col. 1:16, Rev. 4:11).

Even when God saves a person, He does so to show His glory. "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9, see also Eph. 1:5). Hence, a person does not receive salvation based on personal merit. Instead, God blesses people so *He* will receive glory (Ps. 67:7).

Where Are We Going?

Latter-day Saint Teaching

Upon death, "...people who have accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and lived righteously are assigned to a state of happiness known as paradise. People who have rejected the gospel and people who have died without a knowledge of the truth are assigned to a state of darkness called spirit prison, sometimes called hell....After we have been resurrected and judged, each of us will dwell in one of three kingdoms of glory."⁵

Those who enter the Celestial Kingdom (the highest) are those who have "accepted the testimony of Christ [and] obeyed 'the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.'"⁶ They will eventually "become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by [their] own offspring."⁷ The middle kingdom, the Terrestrial, is for honorable people who did not comply with all the requirements for exaltation. The last, the Telestial Kingdom, will be inhabited by the "murderers, liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers—in general, the wicked people of the earth." The Father dwells only in the Celestial Kingdom.⁸

Biblical Teaching

Those who are saved enter the presence of God upon death (Acts 7:59, 2 Cor. 5:1, Phil. 1:21-23). Later, they will receive a resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:35-54). Their ultimate destiny is to continue worshipping God for eternity (Rom. 11:36, Rev. 19:1-6).

The unsaved will enter a temporary state called "Hades" (often translated "hell") awaiting their final judgment. Then, they will be resurrected, judged, and receive punishment for eternity in Gehenna (normally translated "hell") (Matt. 10:28, Mark 9:48, Rev. 20:13-15, 21:8).

To justify levels of heaven, the LDS often appeal to: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). Jesus means that within the Father's one house (heaven), there are many places to live. Hence, there will be plenty of room for all of the Father's adopted children to dwell. This is a guarantee of eternal intimacy with the Father and the Son. The LDS doctrine undermines Jesus' intent since the Father's presence is only in the Celestial Kingdom.

¹ Joseph F. Smith, "The Origin of Man," *Improvement Era*, November 1909, 78, 80, quoted in *Gospel Principles*, (SLC: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986) 9.

² *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*, (SLC: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001) 394.

³ *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, (SLC: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000) 27.

⁴ *Doctrines and Covenants Student Manual*, 395.

⁵ *Preparing for Exaltation*, (SLC: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998) 36, 38.

⁶ James Talmage (apostle) *Articles of Faith* (SLC: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1925) 91-92, quoted in *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, 91.

⁷ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (SLC: Bookcraft, 1955) 2:48, quoted in *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, (SLC: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976) 132.

⁸ *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, 90.