

What is the Mormon Church . . . . really?

## Mormon scriptures and Biblical Progressive Revelation

Does God change his mind?  
Can scriptures change?

Teacher, Yvon Prehn



### It seemed so simple at first

- Changes in Mormon Scripture vs. unchanging nature of the Bible
- But “oh the depths of the riches” in God’s Word, the history, the commentary, the opinions
- We’ll go over key points, but bring in some additional ideas for study
- Goal here to stretch your minds, challenge you
- God’s Word worthy of time, study, our focus, and joy



### Review

- Mormon sources of authority, doctrine, truth
  - Book of Mormon. *Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price*
  - Words of prophets, can add, change, anytime
- Christian Source of authority, doctrine, truth
  - Bible, Old and New Testaments
  - Within the Church no new teachings
  - But significant differences in interpretation
    - For example, Catholic
      - Bible as primary
      - However, as a corrective to error
      - Tradition and Magisterium (the teaching arm of the church)
- Best corrective—a careful hermeneutic



### Review Some of the beliefs not in *Book of Mormon*— **new teachings**

- Organization of the church
- Priesthoods—Mechizedekian & Aaronic
- Plurality of the gods
- God is an exalted man
- Many may become God
- Three degrees of heaven
- Plurality of wives
- The Word of Wisdom
- Pre-existence of man’s spirit
- Eternal progression
- Baptism for the dead
- Celestial marriage



### Challenge: what about. . . .

- Old Testament and then the New Testament?
- Is that the same kind of new teaching?
- No. . . Progressive Revelation



• “The progressive character of divine revelation is recognized in relation to all the great doctrines of the Bible. . . What at first is only obscurely intimated is gradually unfolded in subsequent parts of the sacred volume, until the truth is revealed in its fulness.”

◦ Charles Hodge

### PR also called the “epigenetic model” or “organic unity” of scripture

- Sees divine revelation as analogous to the growth of a tree—perfectly a tree at any size. . . . PR “is the concept that God’s revelation gradually increased in definiteness, clarity, and fullness as it was revealed over time. As the trunk and branches of a tree may grow in several directions concurrently, so also have the concepts of God, Christ, salvation, the nation of Israel, and the church grown simultaneously as God’s revelation progressed.”
  - *Hermeneutics, Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, Virkler & Ayayo



## PR also part of “Sensus Plenior”

- “Such is the nature of divine inspiration that the authors of Scripture were themselves often not conscious of fullest significance and final application of what they wrote. This fuller sense of the Old Testament can be seen only in retrospect and in the light of the New Testament fulfillment. Donald Hagner
- 1 Pet. 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.
- Daniel 12:8 I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king’s business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.
- Makes perfect sense if God ultimate author

## Example: The doctrine of redemption

- The initial promise of the Gospel is Gen 3:15- the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.
- The blood sacrificial system was to teach of the necessity of the redeemer to sacrifice his life for the salvation of his people.
- “The patriarchal, sacrificial system and later the entire levitical ritual, point forward to Christ and His redeeming work. The plan of salvation develops with ever increasing clarity and fullness as the messages of the prophets and the Psalms are historically unfolded. In such a passage as Isaiah 53 the richness of the Gospel is almost complete.” Buswell,, *Systematic Theology*,
- God progressively expands man’s comprehension of the Savior that when He came in the fullness of time- man was ready to recognize Him and understand His coming—and we see that in the NT how it continuously refers back to OT



## Explanation of Progressive Revelation: Matt. 5



- The Bible teaches Progressive Revelation. Jesus said that he had not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets (i.e. the Old Testament) but to fulfill.
- “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 5:17-19**
- **\*\*\*BUT you must read the entire Sermon and rest of NT to see how Jesus applies this statement\*\*\***

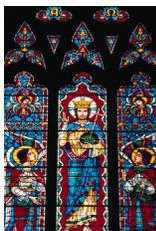
## Fullness of time



- Paul speaks of God sending His Son when the fullness of time came. *But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* (Gal 4:4).
- Hebrews 1:1,2 (entire book) reflects this as well:
- *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb. 1:1-3*
- Mormon note: Last days revelation complete in Jesus—not Joseph Smith

## All the Bible is about Jesus

- Jesus on the Road to Emmaus opened up the Old Testament and showed how it spoke of Him from the beginning.
- *He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:25-27*



## Question about OT Law & Sacrifices

- Ceremonial Law, sacrifices, etc.
  - Complete in Christ Heb 7-10 and the book overall
- Civil
  - Interpersonal
  - Basis for much modern, not intended for all
- Moral, e.g. Ten Commandments, Love neighbor
  - “Not under condemnation . . . Because of identification with Christ. . . However, moral law continues to apply be it is rooted in God’s moral nature.” Virkler



## Progressive Revelation and the character of God

- Mormons, God not eternal or unchangeable, only matter is
- Mormon belief: because they believe men can become gods and that on earth they have the power of a god when it comes to revelation, they can change scripture
- Geisler: "God can change anything that does not involve a contradiction or go against his unchangeable nature."
- An He has not.....though He has revealed it progressively

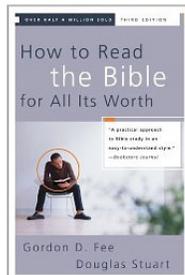
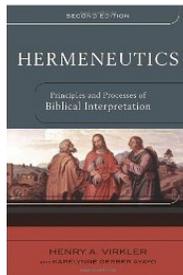


## Summary of Progressive Revelation

- Later revelations not contradictory, but complementary
- Later books do not make mistakes, but reveal more truth
- Later revelations do not negate the former; they simply replace them.
- HOWEVER, to correctly understand the process, need to learn correct exegesis
- Takes TIME, study, reading the whole
  - In Live Life by the Book, model, teach it.....



## Treat God's Word with reverence and respect, 2 books :



## So what are we to do

- 6 STEPS OF HERMENEUTICS/BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION
  1. Historical-cultural analysis, contextual analysis
  2. Lexical-syntactical analysis
  3. Theological analysis
  4. Literary (genre) analysis
  5. Comparison with other interpreters
  6. Application to original hearers

\*\*\*\**only then application to our lives*



## Application

- Take the time to READ and STUDY
- Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a **workman** that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15
- Websites:
  - [www.equip.org](http://www.equip.org)
  - <http://www.ligonier.org>
  - [www.ewordtoday.com](http://www.ewordtoday.com)
- BIBLE itself
- Books about the Bible, commentaries, overviews
- What does this require?
  - Time discipline
  - Matt. 6.33 obedience

