

What is the Mormon Church really?

An Easter study in CONTRASTS: What the Fall means to Mormons and to Christians

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Check out the website:
www.livelifeybythebook.com



Our plan today and in the next 2 weeks as we approach Easter

- 1-Mormon view of original sin and the Fall vs. Christian view
 - The Problem
- 2-Mormon view of atonement vs. Christian view
 - The Solution
- 3-Mormon view of resurrection of Christ vs. Christian view
 - The Result

Why so important

- Core beliefs essential for eternal salvation
- Confusing because same words used, but totally different meaning
- Will help you understand your theology
- Also by understanding an overview of what Mormon's believe
 - You'll understand the parts of their story
 - Able to have a respectful discussion

What is Easter all about?

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ***For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*** 1 Cor. 15:1-4

Of first importance

- "Christ died for **our sins** according to the Scriptures"
- Definition of SIN, defines SALVATION
 - What do we mean by "original sin" and "the Fall"?
 - What did these do for the relationship with God and man?
 - What does it take to make it right?
- Mormon view first, then Biblical Christian view

Mormon view of the FALL

- View of the FALL is part of "Great Plan of Happiness"
<http://seminary.lds.org/manuals/Book-of-Mormon-seminary-teacher-Resource-Manual/dm-trm-13-9p-13-6.asp>
- "The essential components of the *great plan of happiness, of redemption, of salvation, are these:*"
- Premortal existence
Spiritual creation
Agency (free will)
War in heaven
Physical creation
The Fall and mortality ←
- Principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ
The Atonement
Life beyond the grave
Spirit world
Judgment
Resurrection

Some key points—follow to make sense of all

- **Premortal Existence**
 - Before our mortal birth we lived with our Heavenly Father (see [Job 38:4–7](#); [Jeremiah 1:5](#); [Abraham 3:21–23](#)). Heavenly Father is a glorified, perfected, celestial being with a body of flesh and bones (see [D&C 130:22](#)). Heavenly Father is the father of our spirit bodies (see [Numbers 16:22](#); [Acts 17:29](#); [Hebrews 12:9](#); [Moses 3:5](#))
 - He possesses a fulness of all godly attributes and joy, and He desires that His children become like Him (see [Matthew 5:48](#); [2Nephi 9:18](#); [Moses 1:39](#)).
- **Spiritual Creation**
 - Abraham saw that all of Heavenly Father's children were "intelligences" or spirits that were organized before the world was (see [Abraham 3:18–23](#)). The spirit of each individual is in the likeness of the person in mortality, male and female (see [D&C 77:2](#); [132:63](#); [Moses 6:9–10](#); [Abraham 4:27](#)). All are in the image of heavenly parents"

Agency

- Each person has the divine gift of agency to choose good or evil.
- A person may worship how, where, or what he or she may, but only by learning and obeying celestial laws can he or she be exalted.
- The proper exercise of our moral agency is essential to becoming like God (see [2Nephi 2:14–16](#)).

The council of the Gods, the plan of the Eternal Father . .

- Provided for the creation of an earth whereupon his children would receive physical bodies and would be tested according to his commandments (see [Moses 6:3–10, 22, 59](#); [Abraham 3:24–25](#); [4:26–27](#)) . . .
- The divine plan required one to be sent as a savior and redeemer to fulfill the plan of the Father. The Firstborn of the Eternal Father, Jehovah, willingly volunteered and was chosen (see [Moses 4:1–2](#); [Abraham 3:19, 22–27](#)).
- "Others rebelled, and there was a war in heaven. Satan and those who followed him in rebellion against the Father's plan were cast out and denied mortality (see [Revelation 12:7–13](#); [D&C 29:36, 76:28](#); [Moses 4:3](#)).
- **Physical Creation**
 - The physical creation of the heavens, the earth, and all things thereon was another essential step in helping us become like our Father in Heaven (see [Moses 1:33–39](#); [Abraham 3:24–26](#)).

The Fall and Mortality:KEY

- The Fall of Adam and Eve was the next step in the great plan of happiness.
- The Fall brought about the conditions of mortality, including spiritual and physical death (see [2Nephi 2:19–25](#); [Alma 42:1–10](#)).
- Mortal life on earth is essential to becoming like God. It provides us with the opportunity to gain a physical body and to be able to continue to grow and learn by having the freedom to choose to follow the counsel of God or the enticements of Satan (see [Alma 42:1–12](#); [D&C 29:36–43](#); [Moses 5:9–12](#)).
- It is by the choices we make that we "prove" ourselves (see [Abraham 3:25](#); see also *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2Samuel*, pp.39–43).

www.Mormon.org description:

- As God's first children on earth, Adam and Eve were living in their garden paradise. They didn't feel any sorrow or pain, which might seem nice, except that without it, they also couldn't feel joy. They didn't remember their pre-earth life. If they hadn't eaten the forbidden fruit, they would have lived like that forever and never had children. Mankind never would have been born or the world populated.
- As we know, Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's temptations to eat the fruit . . . But it wasn't all bad because they could now feel great joy. "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25) . . .
- Once out of the garden, they were able to progress and learn to become more like our Heavenly Father. In addition, they could have children, which meant the rest of God's spirit children (all of us) could come to Earth, experience physical bodies, and be proven by our daily choices.

"What do Mormons believe about original sin?"

- This question is most simply answered by a statement Joseph Smith gave about our beliefs: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." (AoS 1:2)
 - We also believe that "every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning" (D&C 93:38). Additionally, . . .
 - In short, this means that we are not inherently evil because of an "original sin". Rather, we are created innocent with the freedom to choose good or evil and are accountable for only the choices we make and not for the choices Adam made.
- From:<http://www.whatdomormonsbelieve.com>

Summary of the Mormon view of Original sin—the Fall

- Adam's "fall" was not entirely a bad thing
- Without it people could not experience "joy"
- Without it no children could be born and become mortal
- Without becoming mortal people can't progress to exaltation and become gods
- No belief that people carry Adam's guilt
- Everyone is born innocent
- All responsible for own sins

Contrast in Christian view of Sin

- **Hamartiology** (Greek: ἁμαρτία, *hamartia*, "missing the mark," "sin," + -λογία, *-logia* "sayings" or "discourse") is the branch of Christian theology which aims to develop and articulate a doctrine of the biblical concept of sin.
- According to classical definition of St. Augustine of Hippo sin is *a word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God.* (and the start of this was at the Fall) The doctrine of sin is central to Christianity, since its basic message is about redemption in Jesus Christ.

• Wikipedia: Christian view of sin

The biblical view of the Fall

- Sin was not necessary for "joy"
- They already had "fullness of joy" in God's presence (Ps. 16)
- God clearly told them the consequences
- *Gen. 2:17 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.*
- "dying though shalt die"
 - Hebrew word repeated, *muwth, muwth* dif. tenses
- Immediate spiritual death, eventual bodily death
- Eternal separation from God if no Savior

Matthew Henry's commentary, a direct contradiction to Mormons



Matthew Henry
(1662–1714)

- A confirmation of his present happiness to him, in that grant, *Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat.* This was not only an allowance of liberty to him, in taking the delicious fruits of paradise, as a recompence for his care and pains in dressing and keeping it (1 Co. 9:7, 10), but it was, withal, an assurance of life to him, immortal life, upon his obedience. . . .
- "Continue holy as thou art, in conformity to thy Creator's will, and thou shalt continue happy as thou art in the enjoyment of thy Creator's favour, either in this paradise or in a better."
- Thus, upon condition of perfect personal and perpetual obedience, Adam was sure of paradise to himself and his heirs for ever.

- The steps of the transgression, were not steps upward, but downward towards the pit—steps that take hold on hell. . . . In neglecting the tree of life, of which he was allowed to eat, and eating of the tree of knowledge, which was forbidden, Adam plainly showed a contempt of what God had bestowed on him, and a desire for what God did not see fit to give him.
- He had no corrupt nature within, to betray him; but had a freedom of will, in full strength, not weakened or impaired. He turned aside quickly. He drew all his posterity into sin and ruin. Who then can say that Adam's sin had but little harm in it?
- Sin brought death into the world: if Adam had not sinned, he had not died.
- *Nothing good in any of this*

Conclusions

- Mormon teaching about the Fall, NOT that of the Bible
- The Mormon message: "thou shalt not surely die" a message from the same enemy who spoke in the garden
- The Fall was not the way to happiness
- The Fall was the way to death
- To deny the Fall and its consequences is the ultimate deception because then we see no need for a DIVINE Savior
- Distortions of atonement and resurrection follow
 - And we'll discuss them next