

Is God An Exalted, Glorified Man? Part 2

by Marvin W. Cowan

Devout Mormons will answer the question in our title differently than an evangelical Christian. Our last article mentioned Joseph Smith's *King Follett Discourse* in which the founder of Mormonism taught that "God Himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man." Smith went on to say that God was "once a man like us" and He "dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ Himself did."

While some think that Smith's doctrine of God is not taught in Mormonism today, our last article showed that it is an integral part of Mormon theology. It is also a vital part of the LDS doctrine of "eternal progression." *Gospel Principles* is published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and "was written as a personal study guide and as a teacher's manual," according to the Introduction. In the *current edition*, chapter one says, "God has a body that looks like ours. His eternal spirit is housed in a tangible body of flesh and bones (see *Doctrine and Covenants* [D&C] 130:22).

God's body, however, is perfected and glorified, with a glory beyond all description." Chapter two begins by saying, "God is not only our ruler and creator; He is also our Heavenly Father. 'All men and women are literally the sons and daughters of Deity...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'" (*Gospel Principles*, pp. 8, 11). On page 14 it says, "We learned that if we followed his plan, we would become like Him (God). We would have a resurrected body; we would have all power in heaven and on earth and would become heavenly parents and have spirit children just as He does (see D&C 132:19-20)." Page 302 explains, "These spirit children will have the same relationship to them (their parents) as we do to our Heavenly Father." It also says, "We can become like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation."

Gospel Principles says, to achieve exaltation certain ordinances are required: "1. We must be baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ (LDS). 2. We must receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost (by LDS Priesthood). 3. We must receive the temple *endowment* (blessings). 4. We must be married for time and eternity" (in an LDS Temple). To achieve exaltation it also lists 17 more commandments to keep along with enduring to the end. It further says, "This is the way our Heavenly Father became God" (*Gospel Principles*, pp. 303, 305).

Search These Commandments is the title of the 1984 Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide. On page 151 it says, "When he was a young man, *Lorenzo Snow* (who later became the 5th LDS Prophet) was promised by the Lord through the Patriarch to the (LDS)

Church that through obedience to the gospel *he could become as great as God*, and you cannot wish to be greater.” On page 152 it says, “Elder (Lorenzo) Snow expressed this new found understanding in these words: ‘As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be.’ Later the Prophet Joseph Smith assured him: ‘Brother Snow, that is *true gospel doctrine*, and it is a revelation from God to you.’”

On the same page it says, “President Joseph Fielding Smith (10th LDS Prophet) said: ‘*Our Father in heaven*, according to the Prophet (Joseph Smith), *had a Father*, and since there has been a condition of this kind through all eternity, each Father had a Father’ (*Doctrines of Salvation* 2:47). President Joseph F. Smith (6th LDS Prophet) taught: ‘I know that God is a being with body, parts and passions...Man was born of woman; Christ, the Savior was born of woman; and God, *the Father was born of woman*’ (LDS Church News, 19 Sept. 1936, p. 2).

President Wilford Woodruff (4th LDS Prophet) explained: ‘*God has had his (temple) endowments a great many years ago*’” (*Search These Commandments*, p. 152. This manual was published by the LDS Church with a copyright by the LDS President). All of the men quoted above were Presidents and Prophets of the LDS Church. There is no higher authority in Mormonism. Thus, what they taught is either true Mormon doctrine, or Mormonism has Prophets who teach false doctrine and that makes them false Prophets!

The *Bible* does not teach this Mormon view of God. It says Hosea 11:9, “*I am God and not man.*” In Isaiah 43:10 God said, “*Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*” And Isaiah 44:6 says, “Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: *I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.*” In Isaiah 44:8 God also said, “Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; *I know not any.*” In these few verses, God declared He is God, *not* man. He said He is the first and last and that no God existed before Him and none will exist after Him. First John 3:20 says God “knows all things.”

Did God lie when He said He didn’t know any other God? If God had a Father who was a God before Him, He surely should have known it! And if men can become Gods, He should have known that too. The Bible does not teach that God was once a man who *became* a God. On the contrary, Psalm 90:2 declares, “From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.” That is why the Bible often calls God the Eternal or Everlasting God! Therefore, the Mormon teaching about God is neither biblical nor Christian.

Those who want to read more about the LDS concept of God can do so in my chapter on God in my book *Mormon Claims Answered*. Next time we will consider God the Father’s relationship to His Son, according to Mormonism.