

Who or What is the Holy Ghost?

by Marvin W. Cowan

Joseph Smith, Mormonism's founder said, "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a *Spirit*: and these three constitute three distinct personages and *three Gods*." LDS scripture also says, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of *Spirit*. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (*Doctrine & Covenants* 130:22). Joseph Smith also taught that "The Holy Ghost is yet a *spiritual body* and *waiting to take to himself a body* as the Saviour did or as God did or the gods before them took *bodies*" (From the Diary of George Laub, p. 29; as published in *Discourses on the Holy Ghost*, p. 73, compiled by N. B. Lundwall). Notice that Mormonism says that the Holy Ghost is a *God* just like God the Father and Son are Gods, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of *Spirit* still waiting to get a body while God the Father and Son have bodies of "flesh and bones as tangible as man's."

However, Mormonism also teaches that in order *to become a God*, one must advance through the steps of eternal progression as Milton R. Hunter shows in *The Gospel Through The Ages*, pages 127-129. Those steps include: existence first as an eternal intelligence; then he must be born of Heavenly Parents as a baby spirit in a pre-mortal world; still later he must be born of mortal parents with a body of flesh and bones on an earth where in time he will die; later he will be resurrected and judged to determine if he has obeyed all of the laws and ordinances of the LDS gospel, including being married in an LDS Temple for all eternity while here on earth. If everything is in order, he can become a God.

Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth LDS Prophet said, "*Celestial* (or temple) *Marriage makes Gods* in eternity." And then he said, "Marriage, like baptism, is an ordinance which has to be performed in this (mortal) life" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. II, pp. 62, 72). Smith also declared, "In that former (pre-mortal) state the great plan of salvation was presented, and we longingly waited for the time to come when we could pass on to *mortality*, knowing that *in no other way could perfection come*" (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 28). The perfection he referred to is the LDS concept of exaltation to Godhood.

W. Cleon Skousen, a former BYU professor said, "*Mortality* made it possible for

us to be endowed with the powers of *procreation for the first time*... The divine power of procreation is described by the Lord as being a fundamental quality of Godhood. In fact, *eternal parenthood is Godhood*' (*The First 2000 Years*, pp. 39-40). Skousen used *Doctrine & Covenants* Sec. 132: 19-20 to teach eternal parenthood, but that section also teaches *polygamy*.

The above teachings raise some important questions about Mormonism's view of the Holy Ghost. If there is "no other way" to perfection and Godhood *except through mortality* (having a body of flesh and bone) as Joseph Fielding Smith said, how did the Holy Ghost become a God if He is still *waiting to get a body*? Smith also said, "*Marriage makes Gods in eternity*" and marriage can only be *performed by mortals here on earth*, so how did the Holy Ghost get to be a God without first becoming a mortal and being *married* for all eternity?

Skousen said it is *mortality that made procreation possible*, but the Holy Ghost is still waiting to get a mortal body, so how can He be a *parent or a God*? Since Skousen said "eternal parenthood is Godhood," does the Holy Ghost have a wife and children?

A manual for Mormons published by the LDS Church and copyrighted by the LDS President says that Satan rebelled against God in the pre-mortal spirit world and

There was war in heaven... Satan and all the spirits that followed him were sent away from the presence of God. One third of the spirits in heaven followed Satan. They were cast down from heaven. Satan and those who followed him were punished. They were *denied the right to receive mortal bodies*. We are here on the earth and have *mortal bodies of flesh and bone*. Because we are here on earth and *have mortal bodies* we know that we chose to follow Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father. Satan and his followers are also on the earth, but as *spirits* (*Gospel Principles*, pp. 16-17).

If the Holy Ghost is a *personage of Spirit* and doesn't have a body, did He follow Satan during the war in heaven? Since the Holy Ghost is still *waiting to get a body*, have we mortals with bodies of flesh and bone on earth advanced beyond Him? These and other questions about the Holy Ghost need to be answered by Mormons.

Mormonism also makes a distinction between the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit. LDS Apostle John Widtsoe said, "The Holy Ghost, sometimes called the Comforter, is the third member of the Godhead, and is a personage, distinct from the Holy Spirit. As a personage, the Holy Ghost cannot any more than the Father and Son be everywhere present in person." He also said, "The chief agent or agency by which the Holy Ghost accomplishes his work, is usually spoken of as the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God. It is a universe-filling medium, or influence" (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, pp. 76, 62). Joseph Fielding Smith further explains, "We should speak of the Holy Ghost as a personage as 'he' and this other Spirit as 'it'" (*Doctrines of Salvation* vol. I, p. 50).

The problem with such teaching is that in the original Greek language "Ghost" and "Spirit" is the same word, so it cannot apply to two different entities! "Ghost" was an old English translation that meant what spirit means today. That is why

modern Bible versions only mention the Holy Spirit. None of the things Mormonism teaches about the Holy Ghost come from the Bible. And if it didn't come from the Bible it is not Christian doctrine. And if the LDS doctrine is not Christian doctrine, can Mormonism be Christian?

Those who want to read more about the LDS concept of the Holy Ghost may do so in *Discourses on the Holy Ghost*, compiled by N. B. Lundwall, published by Bookcraft in Salt Lake City, UT in 1960. Next time we will discuss more LDS teachings about the Son of God.

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