

## **Mormon Beliefs versus the Bible Part Two**

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### **Index**

Sovereignty

Soteriology:

1. Depravity
2. Election
3. The Atonement
4. Irresistible Grace
5. Perseverance

End Notes

### **Sovereignty And Soteriology**

In part two of this series we will look at the subject of soteriology. Soteriology is defined as the system or doctrine of salvation. We will start this section by covering the subject of divine Sovereignty. Systematic Theologies cover this subject under the section dealing with God's attributes. This is proper. However, since divine Sovereignty is related to Soteriology we will examine this topic in this section.

Francis Turretin when discussing the topics of God's Dominion and Sovereignty says:

The proof of both occurs in Predestination.<sup>1</sup>

Turretin is correct in seeing the relationship between sovereignty and soteriology. If God is absolutely Sovereign, our salvation is dependent upon Him. In Exodus 3:14 God declares Himself to be the " I AM that I AM" or the great "I AM", the self-existent one. From this revelation of God's self-existence flows his Sovereignty. We understand Sovereignty as the doctrine that God is the Supreme King and Ruler of the Universe. His will causes all things to happen and by virtue of the fact that God is the creator, He is the owner of all things. Everything is dependent upon Him.

By definition there can be only one Sovereign God. Therefore, that one Sovereign God is absolutely unique. In other words, God is transcendent. By this we mean that God is above and beyond all of His creative works. God is not to be confused with anything that is created. When God is confused or identified with His creation this is the grossest form of idolatry. See Romans 1:22,23 for Scriptural proof of this.

We will begin by looking at some Mormon writers who will demonstrate that the god of Mormonism is not unique and is not sovereign. In fact, some of the writers will openly reject some of God's attributes,

which are related to His Sovereignty. There are a number of modern Mormon writers who freely use such words as sovereignty, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. It should be noted that these writers have radically redefined these words. Some of the Mormons that will be quoted openly glory in a finite non-sovereign god. The Mormon god is clearly not sovereign in the traditional understanding. The Mormon view of sovereignty has tremendous implications for soteriology. A finite, non-sovereign god cannot save anyone. At best this type of god could function as some kind of celestial cosmic cheerleader. This type of finite god may try and show his followers the way to salvation but in reality would not be able to offer any effective assistance.

We then will refute the Mormon rejection of God's Sovereignty with a wealth of Scriptural data. After the refutation of the Mormon position we will look at soteriology in particular. This will be somewhat of a difficult task because there is no systematic approach to Mormon Soteriology.

What exists in Mormonism is a hodge-podge of seemingly disconnected statements on various points of soteriology. Mormonism tends to assume, without grammatical, historical, and exegetical work, doctrinal positions. We will look at the Mormon concepts of the fall, sin, election, the atonement and its extent, grace, and finally the perseverance or security of the believer. These various Mormon doctrines will be set against the vast wealth of Scriptural evidence, which clearly refutes Mormon Soteriology.

## Sovereignty

### **Sovereignty: The Mormon View**

Do Mormons believe in a unique, transcendent, sovereign God?

The early Mormon, Orson Pratt, has some interesting comments about God. We need to first see Pratt's ideas about man, and his eternal progress eventually culminating in godhood. This view of Pratt's could be described as a type of celestial, evolutionary, reincarnation. The end product is millions of gods, which are made up of eternal matter. This eternal matter has intelligence and has taken various forms in its upward evolutionary progress towards godhood. The end product is millions of gods who are absolutely the same. Since there can be only one Sovereign God by definition it follows that Pratt's millions of Mormon gods are not gods at all. One wonders if all these gods wear the same type of uniforms? No doubt, many Christians will be shocked at the following quotations, which supposedly represent historical Christianity. Let us see what Orson Pratt has to say about man and God:

Admitting the eternity of the capacities, then the materials of which our spirits are composed, must have been capable of thinking, moving, willing, &c., before they were organized in the womb of the celestial female. Preceding that period there was an endless duration, and each particle of our spirits had an eternal existence, and was in possession of eternal capacities. Now can it be supposed, for one moment, that these particles were inactive and dormant from all eternity until they received their

organization in the form of the infant spirit? Can we suppose that particles, possessed of the power to move themselves, would not have exerted that power, during the endless duration preceding their organization? If they were once organized in the vegetable kingdom, and then disorganized by becoming the food of celestial animals, and then again re-organized in the form of the spirits of animals, which is a higher sphere of being, then, is it unreasonable to suppose that the same particles have, from all eternity, been passing through an endless chain of unions and disunions, organizations and disorganizations, until at length they are permitted to enter into the highest and most exalted sphere of organization in the image and likeness of God? A transmigration of the same particles of spirits from a lower to a higher organization, is demonstrated from the fact that the same particles exist in a diffused scattered state, mingled with other matter; next, they exist in a united form, growing out of the earth in the shape of grass, herbs, and trees; and after this, these vegetables become food for celestial animals, and these same particles are organized into their offspring, and thus form the spirits of animals. Here, then, is apparently a transmigration of the same particles of spirit from an inferior to a superior organization, wherein their condition is improved, and their sphere of action enlarged. Who shall set any bounds to this upward tendency of spirit? Who shall prescribe limits to its progression? If it abide the laws and conditions of its several states of existence, who shall say that it will not progress until it shall gain the very summit of perfection, and exist in all the glorious beauty of the image of God?<sup>2</sup>

It is quite clear from the above quotation that Pratt believed in some type of evolutionary reincarnation. The intent of this quotation is to demonstrate that the Mormon god is not unique. The Mormon god is the product of forces that exist independently from him. Everything is moving upward towards godhood. What is this driving force? Is it ultimately more important than the Mormon god? Let us consider more of Pratt's Mormon theology:

It has been most generally believed that the Saints will progress in knowledge to all eternity: But when they become one with the Father and Son, and receive a fullness of their glory, that will be the end of all progression in knowledge, because they will be nothing more to be learned. The Father and the Son do not progress in knowledge and wisdom, because they already know all things past, present, and to come. All that become like the Father and Son will know as much as they do, and consequently will learn no more. The Father and Son, and all who are like them and one with them, already know as much as any Beings in existence know, or ever can know. In the twenty-second

paragraph of this article we showed that there could not possibly be but one God, so far as the attributes are concerned, but so far as it regards persons, that there were an immense number of Gods. Now we wish to be distinctly understood that each of these personal Gods has equal knowledge with all the rest; there are none among them that are in advance of the others in knowledge; though some may have been Gods as many millions of years, as there are particles of dust in all the universe, yet there is not one truth that such are in possession of but what every other God knows. They are all equal in knowledge, and in wisdom, and in the possession of all truth.<sup>3</sup>

Some of these gods apparently have been god longer than the Mormon Father-god has been. Pratt in the above quotation refers to the twenty-second paragraph of his lengthy article. In the twenty-second paragraph Pratt further confuses the reader as to who God is. Pratt has this to say:

It is truth, light, and love that we worship and adore; these are the same in all worlds; and as these constitute God...Wherever you find a fullness of wisdom, knowledge, truth, goodness, love, and such like qualities, there you find God in all His glory, power, and majesty, therefor, if you worship these adorable perfections you worship God.<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate god in Pratt's Mormon theology is not even personal. For Pratt "truth", light, and love" are god. This is complete nonsense. All the personal gods in Pratt's Mormon universe are the same. They all share the same amount of knowledge and power. This concept of God is meaningless. As will be seen, the Bible, God's revelation to man, sets forth a much different view. Pratt's Mormon god is clearly not sovereign or unique.

What did Mormon founder Joseph Smith have to say that is relevant to this subject? Let us consider some of Smith's thoughts on this:

The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have and end. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits: for they are co-equal with our Father in heaven.<sup>5</sup>

Smith had more to say that is relevant to this discussion:

God himself is increasing and progressing in knowledge, power, and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end.<sup>6</sup>

Smith's god seems to be remarkably different from Pratt's Mormon god. Who is right-- Smith or Pratt? Are both men wrong? It is not difficult to tell, Biblically speaking. Smith's god, is co-equal with these

so-called intelligences and increasing in "power, and dominion", is clearly not the Sovereign God of Holy Scripture. If Smith's god is gaining in "power, and dominion" attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence should not be applied to a deity of this nature.

Bruce R. McConkie, a fairly recent modern Mormon writer, has this to say about God's ability to rule:

It is only because of apostasy and rebellion that he is kept from ruling in the hearts of men in the present state of things.<sup>7</sup>

McConkie, probably more than most Mormon writers, utilizes words such as sovereignty, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Mormon philosophy professor Kent E. Robson takes McConkie to task for using these terms in such a way as to bring Mormonism perilously close to a form of absolutism that would destroy its "unique finitistic"<sup>8</sup> theology. It should be noted, however, that McConkie redefines these terms in such a way as to place them clearly outside of historic Christian thought. What should be noted in the above quotation from McConkie is how he limits God's rule. God, according to McConkie, is limited in his rule as a result of some action on the part of man. God is Sovereign and nothing can stay his hand. Even the will of man is unable.

The next quotation will come from one of Mormonism's "Standard Works". We will look at the Book of Abraham in the *Pearl of Great Price*:

And thus there shall be the reckoning of the time of one planet above another, until thou come nigh unto Kolob, which Kolob is after the reckoning of the Lord's time; which Kolob is set nigh unto the throne of God, to govern all those planets which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest.<sup>9</sup>

Here we have the planet Kolob governing other planets. We are not sure how a planet can govern other planets. It is possible Smith understood this as some kind of gravitational force, which he understood as being a type of governing. At any rate, in Mormon Scripture the idea of natural law is present. If God is Sovereign there is no such thing as natural law, unless of course one wants to defend a form of Deism. God does not govern the Universe according to natural law. He governs the Universe by his word.

The next Mormon writer we will consider is W. Cleon Skousen. Skousen has some very revealing things to say about the Mormon god's lack of sovereignty:

God is omnipotent, but only within the circumscribed boundaries of law, truth, and justice...But who is it that occupies a position great enough in the universe to require of the exalted Elohim his Godhood in case He should violate any of the principles of truth and justice...In other words, as God extended His power and influence throughout His great kingdom, He did so by obtaining

the voluntary cooperation and support of vast concourses of intelligences.<sup>10</sup>

Skousen asks a question "who is it that occupies a position great enough in the universe to require of the exalted Elohim"? This is a good question. Mormons may want to ask themselves who the real God is? Are the eternal laws, principles and intelligences in reality the god of the Mormon universe? The Mormon god cannot govern unless he meets the requirements of many outside forces. It is quite clear that the Mormon god is not sovereign.

Kent E. Robson, a Mormon philosophy professor at the University of Utah, has an interesting essay in the book *Line Upon Line* which promotes the belief in a finite god. He is concerned about Mormonism's drift towards absolutism. Mr. Robson explains an essential element of the Mormon position as follows:

For Mormons, God "organized" previously existing elements according to certain principles or laws which are themselves independent of him and are to some extent out of his control.<sup>11</sup>

It is clear according to Mr. Robson that the god of the Mormons is finite and certainly not sovereign in the traditional sense of the term. If God does not control these so-called principles or laws, who does? Are these principles and laws in reality God? Do they control God? Where did these principles and laws come from?

Kent E. Robson closes his essay, which promotes the glories of believing in a finite god with these words:

Mormons who are attracted to terms of absolutism should carefully consider what else they may unintentionally be embracing. They should consistently renounce such attributes [omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience] or clearly distinguish between Mormon usage and traditional Christian usage. Unless this is done, I fear that absolutism may yet invade and perhaps change the uniqueness and very appeal of Mormon theology.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Robson can surely be complimented for his honesty in this essay concerning his Mormon beliefs. It would probably be more than could be hoped for if Mormon writers took Mr. Robson's admonition to heart and did distinguish for their readers the different way in which they use traditional Christian terminology. If all Mormons were as forthright with their beliefs as Mr. Robson the present debate between Mormons and Christians would surely lose much of the animosity.

Blake T. Ostler is another Mormon writer who is honest and forthright with his beliefs. It is enjoyable to read his essay in the book *Line Upon Line*. In the following comments by Mr. Ostler we can see that

the Mormon god is dependent upon things outside of himself and consequently, not sovereign:

The contemporary Mormon concept of a finite God is an adequate object of faith because all individuals, indeed all aspects of reality, look to him for the realization of all that matters most ultimately. The Mormon God is thus the Optimal Actualizer. God makes all things possible, but he can make all things actual only by working in conjunction with free individuals and actual entities. Hence, Mormonism does not shy away from recognizing humans as co-creators in God's purposes. God needs us and we need him for the realization of all that matters most.<sup>13</sup>

It is refreshing to see Mr. Ostler's openness in setting his beliefs apart from historic Christianity. Mr. Ostler's Mormon god is clearly limited by man's so-called free will. Since Mr. Ostler proceeds logically he cannot accept the truth of man's responsibility and God's Sovereignty. The Mormon god is again seen as a dependent being, which is clearly not the Sovereign God of Scripture.

The final writer we will consider is Peter C. Appleby a philosophy professor at the University of Utah. It is sad to see someone go down the road of unbelief that Mr. Appleby has taken. When one accepts the pronouncements of the Mormon leaders that the Bible is not trustworthy they may very well be doomed from the start. Free will is an idol that Mr. Appleby needs to purge from his theological system. At least free will, as he understands it. Let us see where this false god of free will has led him:

First, we must deny that God is solely or primarily responsible for the design and creation of our world, since that world is so unjust and unmerciful to many, if not most, of its inhabitants....The second finitist requirement involves the curtailment of traditional claims about divine power, denying omnipotence and insisting that God has none of the miraculous powers attributed to him in Christian literature....But we deny that God has infallible knowledge of every future occurrence, because this conflicts with the view that moral agents are free in their decisions....These revisions, [in traditional Christian doctrine] of course, would affect some familiar religious discourse. They would deny the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Creation and Fall in order to avoid the charge that God deliberately condemned half of humanity as a means of teaching moral lessons to the other half....<sup>14</sup>

Peter C. Appleby is not unique in the view he promotes. Once someone accepts, as he does, an unbiblical view of free will he uses this to eliminate God's Sovereignty and attributes one by one. Mr. Appleby should know, given his philosophical training that the free will argument will not save his god from being charged with sin. Antony Flew's *God and Philosophy* effectively destroys the notion that the free will of man can save his god from being responsible for the evil in the world. The real problem with Mr. Appleby is that he has a standard of human reason that he holds God accountable to. This

standard of human reason is a form of rationalism, and an idol to be repented of. Mormonism needs to purge itself from the unbiblical rationalism that drives it to reject the God of the Bible. We will close this survey of various Mormon writers on the subject of God's Sovereignty with a relevant quote from the Christian philosopher Gordon H. Clark:

God is sovereign. Whatever he does is just, for this very reason, because he does it. If he punishes a man, the man is justly punished, and hence the man is responsible. This answers the form of argument which runs: Whatever God does is just; eternal punishment is not just; therefore God does not so punish. If the one who argues thus means that he has received a special revelation that there is not eternal punishment, we cannot deal with him here. If, however, he is not laying claim to a special revelation of future history but to some philosophic principle which is intended to show that eternal punishment is unjust, the distinction between our positions becomes immediately obvious. Calvin has rejected the view of the universe which makes a law, whether of justice or of evolution, instead of the law-giver, supreme. Such a view is similar to Platonic dualism which posited a world of Ideas superior to the divine Artificer. God in such a system is finite or limited, bound to follow or obey the independent pattern. But those who hold to the sovereignty of God determine what justice is by observing what God actually does. Whatever God does is just. What he commands men to do or not to do is similarly just or unjust.<sup>15</sup>

Many Mormon writers make much of the supposed influence of Greek philosophy upon Christianity. In reality it is Mormonism that has been influenced by Greek philosophy. See "Some Unanswered Questions Regarding the Mormon World View" by this writer. This work shows a number of areas in which there exist an essential agreement of thought between Mormonism and ancient pagan philosophy.

There is no standard higher than God. He is Holy and Just. Mormonism, by postulating a law structure above God, makes God accountable to something outside of Himself. Attempting to place laws above God to which He is accountable, is nothing more than a bold attempt to de-throne God. As clearly seen in Mr. Appleby's essay, this leads to a continual downgrading or rejection of Biblical revelation. By holding to the idols of free will, and a law structure above God, Mormonism has to reject sovereignty, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. We hope that in the section on the Christian view of Sovereignty that Mormons will be called back to a Biblical view of God.

### **The Sovereignty of God the Christian View:**

In this section we will look at numerous scriptures that prove that God is sovereign and clearly different from the position of the Mormon writers that were surveyed.



## **I. The Sovereign will of God:**

**A. The Sovereign will of God in general.** We can see in the following passages God's sovereignty in the area of preservation and creation.

Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth; in the seas, and all deep places. Ps. 135:6

O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. Jer. 18:6

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. John 3:27

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Rev. 4:11

## **2. God is the governor of the nations:**

For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations. Ps. 22:28

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down, and setteth up another. Ps. 75:6,7

The King's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. Prov. 21:1

## **3. God's will is sovereign in election:**

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor him that runneth, but God that showeth mercy. Ro. 9:15,16

## **4. God's will is sovereign in regeneration:**

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Jas. 1:18

## **5. God's will is sovereign in sanctification:**

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Phil. 2:13

## **6. God is sovereign even in the suffering of believers:**

For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. I Peter 3:17

## **7. God's will is seen in the suffering of Christ:**

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not will, but thine, be done. Luke 22:42

Him being delivered by the derminate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Acts 2:23

## **8. God's will in man's life and destiny:**

But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. Act 18:21

That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Ro. 15:32

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. Jas. 4:15

## **B. The freedom of God's will:**

If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? Job 11:10

Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. Job 33:13

But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Ps. 115:3

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps. Prov. 16:9

There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. Prov. 19:21

Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood. Isa. 10:15

Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? Isa. 29:16

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Isa. 45:9

Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great services against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God. Eze. 29:18-20

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? Matt. 20:15

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy....Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonour. Ro. 9:15,16,20,21

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. I Cor. 12:11

### **C. God s revealed will, or what He commands in Scripture:**

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Issac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. Gen. 22:2

And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say to Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. Ex. 4:21,23 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. II Kings 20:5,6

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matt. 7:21

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. Matt. 12:50

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. John 7:17

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Acts 2:23

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Ro. 12:2

#### **D. The secret or hidden sovereign will of God:**

God's purposes are not always revealed. The secret will of God sometimes appears to contradict the

revealed will. In light of the fact that Mormonism is infected with the enlightenment philosophy of rationalism, this leads Mormons to reject God's sovereign secret will. The Mormon rejects portions of scripture because it is not in accord with human reason.

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Gen. 50:20

Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech. Judges 9:23

And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. I Kings 22:20-23

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. Ps. 76:10

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. Isa. 45:7

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it? Amos 3:6

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Acts 2:23

## **E. God's sovereignty in seemingly chance events:**

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. I Kings 22:34

Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment

upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he have done eating and drinking.

Ruth 3:3

By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe. Jos. 14:2

Ye shall therefore describe the land unto seven parts and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. Jos. 18:6

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. Prov. 16:33

## **II. The sovereign power of God:**

### **A. God's powers even beyond that which is realized.**

Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Gen. 18:14

Ah LORD God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there in nothing too hard for thee. Jer. 32:17

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. Zech. 8:7,8

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Matt. 3:9

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? Matt. 26:53

### **B. God's sovereign power, or His omnipotence:**

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. Gen. 14:19

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. Ex. 19:5

Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Deut. 10:15

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the magesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. I Chron. 29:11

Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Neh. 9:6

Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, what doest thou? Job 9:12

Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. Job 14:5

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as it it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Job 38:8-11

The heavens are thine, the earth alas is thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them. Ps. 89:11

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hand. Ps. 102:25

Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. Ps. 104:9

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. Ps. 145:13

Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

Praise him, ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Ps. 148:3-6

When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth. Prov. 8:27

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. Ecc. 3:14

Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? Ecc. 7:13

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?... Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. Isa. 40:12,26

Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. Isa. 42:5

Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? Isa. 43:13

Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? Jer. 5:22

Ah LORD God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. Jer. 32:17

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said,



Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. Dan. 2:19-22

How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation. Dan. 4:3

And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed with with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. Dan. 5:21

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:17

And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. Jonah 4:6

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Matt. 19:26

For with God nothing shall be impossible. Luke 1:37

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Ro. 1:20

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Eph. 1:19

### **C. God's sovereign power in creation when dealing with men:**

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself. Isa. 44:24

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Ro. 4:17

#### **D. God's sovereign providence:**

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Ex. 15:10

The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Ps. 103:19 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. Isa. 54:16

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Lam. 3:37 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered Matt. 10:29,30

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Co. 1:16,17

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the exceeding image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heb. 1:3

#### **E. God's sovereign power in redemptive:**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my laws in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every

man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Jer. 31:31-33

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. Hosea 2:19

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. Hosea 11:1

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Ro. 1:16

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. I Cor. 1:24

## **F. God is the sovereign ruler of the nations:**

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying. Ezra 1:1

God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. Ps. 47:8

God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me. Ps. 60:6-8

Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. Ps. 82:8

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is

stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back. Isa. 14:24-27

That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Dan. 4:25

### **G. Israel's enemies raised up and used by God to accomplish His sovereign purposes:**

And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. I Kings 19:15-19

In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. II Kings 15:37

The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria. Isa. 7:17

Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Isa. 9:11,12

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. Isa. 10:5

And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. Jer. 27:6

Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. Amos

I have cited over one hundred scripture passages that deal with God's sovereign control over man, and the created realm. God controls even seemingly chance events. God's sovereign control even extends to man's heart. God knows the future and He controls the future. There is a vast difference between the plain teaching of scripture and the beliefs of the Mormon writers that have been quoted. The Christian will be able to rejoice with the Psalmist by saying: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path". The Mormon needs to forsake his rationalism. It is exceedingly sinful to bring God's word before, and hold it accountable to, the judgement seat of human reason. This is idolatry. We will now begin to look at some particulars of soteriology.

## Soteriology

### **1. Depravity:**

#### **1. Man's Depravity: The Mormon View**

How does Mormonism view the fall of man and sin? Former Mormon president Joseph Fielding Smith in his work *Doctrines of Salvation Vol. One* makes a number of comments concerning this subject that are representative of most Mormons. Let us survey some of his ideas on this important subject:

How did Adam and Eve sin? Did they come out in direct opposition to God and his government? No.... When Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden, the Lord passed a sentence upon him. Some people have looked upon that sentence as being a dreadful thing. It was not; it was a blessing. I do not know that it can truthfully be considered even as a punishment in disguise...."Transgression" Not "Sin" of Adam. I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. <sup>16</sup>

Any man who believes that little children are born in sin and are tainted by original sin, or the sin of somebody else, has failed to comprehend the nature of the atonement of Jesus Christ.... Every child-I don't care where it is born; I don't care what its color-that is born into this world comes into it innocent in its infant state.... Why, when you look into the face of a little babe and he looks up and smiles at you, can you believe that that little child is tainted with any kind of sin that will deprive it of the presence of God should it die?<sup>17</sup>

As I will demonstrate, the above quotations by Joseph F. Smith are completely at odds with scripture. His method of looking into little children's faces and determining that they are not sinners is nothing more than wishful humanistic thinking. James E. Talmage, a Mormon apostle, has something more to

say on this topic that is relevant:

The present fallen status of mankind, as expressed in our mortal condition, was inaugurated by Adam and Eve; but divine justice forbids that we be accounted sinners solely because our parents transgressed. Though the privations, the vicissitudes, and the unrelenting toil enforced by the state of mortal existence be part of our heritage from Adam, we are enriched thereby; for in just such conditions do we find opportunity to develop the powers of soul that shall enable us to overcome evil, to choose the good, and to win salvation and exaltation in the mansions of our Father.<sup>18</sup>

Talmage denies that we should be accounted sinners because of Adam's sin. What Talmage overlooks is the fact that Adam is the federal head of the human race. Adam acted as the representative of the human race and as a result his sin becomes in a very real way our sin. A president of a country acts as a representative of his particular nation. His actions may very well cause another nation to invade his nation, thus all of his subjects would experience the results of their president's decisions. The doctrine of federal or covenantal headship is taught throughout scripture. A husband is the head of his wife. A husband's actions or decisions always affect his wife and children. Talmage also believes that we are enriched as a result of Adam's sin. Talmage held to a deficient view of sin. God's people historically have always prayed for deliverance from this old sinful world. Our prayers are that we would be delivered from personal sins that bring us much grief and godly sorrow.

What exactly are the effects of sin in the human race? How does sin affect us? Joseph F. Smith gives some more information on this subject:

Let us illustrate: A man walking along the road happens to fall into a pit so deep and dark that he cannot climb to the surface and regain his freedom. How can he save himself from his predicament? Not by any exertions on his part, for there is no means of escape in the pit. He calls for help and some kindly disposed soul, hearing his cries for relief, hastens to his assistance and by lowering a ladder, give to him the means by which he may climb again to the surface of the earth. This was precisely the condition that Adam placed himself and his posterity in.<sup>19</sup>

Adam, according to Mormonism, is aware of his condition, and is able to cry for help. When the ladder is lowered down to him, he is able to climb out of the pit. Is this the condition of man that is set forth in scripture? This view of man's condition is known as pelagianism. It is a heresy that was condemned in the fourth century.

Former Mormon apostle LeGrand Richards explains some more of the ability that the human race supposedly has:

Thus all nations and people have free agency and, according to their choice, the Lord will do unto them.... If all men are not saved, it will be because they, in the exercise of their free will, do not accept his gift of grace.<sup>20</sup>

Richards believes that man, though unsaved, has the power within himself to exercise his supposed free will. If man does not do this then he will not be saved. It seems that man according to Richards is saved as a result of exercising his own will. Man in his fallen state still has much to contribute towards his salvation.

Let us consider another bit of information from Talmage concerning man's state after the fall. Talmage tells us that man can be sincere and of a humble disposition before being in a state of grace:

Although faith is called the first principle of the Gospel of Christ, though it be in fact the foundation of religious life, yet even faith is preceded by sincerity of disposition and humility of soul, whereby the word of God may make an impression upon the heart. No compulsion is used in bringing men to a knowledge of God; yet as fast as we open our hearts to the influences of righteousness, the faith that leads to life eternal will be given us of our Father.<sup>21</sup>

Talmage says in the above quote that man must do something. God does not act upon man. We must open our hearts to God. How can a man open his heart to God? Why would man want to do this? Man according to Mormonism is able to make quite a significant contribution to his own salvation.

Mormonism, while not using the term, holds to a form of what is known in Arminian theology as prevenient grace. Christ's death in Mormonism overcomes original sin and insures that man will get out of the grave in the resurrection. Mormonism clearly holds to a pelagian view of man and sin. Sin, while being an obstacle, does not prevent man from seeing a need to have faith and call for help. When help comes, then man climbs out of the pit through his own effort.

### **Man's Depravity: The Christian View**

Mormons have rejected the doctrine of Original Sin primarily because it is not in accord with human reason. A number of Mormon scholars believe that this doctrine has its origin in Greek philosophy. The question of its truthfulness has to be settled within the pages of Holy Scripture. What is the basis for this doctrine? The primary text is found in Romans 5:12-19. What does this passage say?

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to

Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgement was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Ro. 5:12-19

This passage clearly teaches the connection between Adam's sin and the human race. Adam as the covenantal head of the human family brought sin to his posterity. This is proved from the fact that death now reigns in the world. In the book *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*, John Murray had this to say concerning this passage:

There is, of course, no question but the imputation of sin carries with it the reatus, the obligation to satisfy justice. But we may not overlook the fact that Paul in Romans 5:12-19 uses not only expressions which imply the penal consequence of sin but also the expressions which imply involvement in sin itself. As has been observed repeatedly in other connections in the course of this study, Paul not only takes account of death as penetrating to all and as reigning over all by means of the trespass (vss. 12,14,15,17) and not only of condemnation as coming upon all through the one trespass, but also of the fact that all were constituted sinners. That is to say, not only does the wages of sin come upon all, not only does the judgement of condemnation pass upon all, but all are indicted with the sin which is the basis of condemnatory judgement and of which death is the wages. If the imputation referred to in verse 13 meant merely the obligation to satisfy justice, the reatus poenae, then it would have sufficed for Paul to speak of death and condemnation. In reality he is not content with the thought of penal consequence; he lays the foundation for all predication in terms of consequence in the propositions, "all sinned", or were "constituted sinners" may be interpreted to mean simply, "were made judicially liable to the sanctions of justice"<sup>22</sup>

Mormons may want to scoff at Murray's comments. It should be noted that when the Mormon scholar



Louis Midgley received Murray's book he was unable to refute it. He simply engaged in character assassination of this writer who provided him the book.<sup>23</sup>

We will now survey a number of passages from scripture to prove that the Mormon position outlined above is in complete opposition with the teaching of scripture concerning man and sin:

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. Gen. 2:17

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen. 6:5

Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man which drinketh iniquity like water? Job 15:15,16

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Ps. 14:2,3

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Ps. 51:5

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Ecc. 8:11

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. Prov. 30:12

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isa. 53:6

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Jer. 13:23

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jer. 17:9

The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity. Micah 7:2-4

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. John 3:19

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. John 6:53

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:16

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. Acts 14:41

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Ro. 3:10-12

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. I Cor. 1:18

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. II Cor. 1:9

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. II Cor. 5:17

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and

were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Eph. 2:1-3

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Eph. 2:12

But we are as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Isa. 64:6

The above scriptures set forth a completely different picture of man's condition than what the Mormon writers have promoted. In the Mormon view man is not dead. He is able to recognize his condition and call for help. When help comes and provides assistance, man is able to climb up a ladder out of the problem that faces him. In the Christian view man is dead. He does not recognize his condition as serious at all. His nature is corrupted, and man makes all decisions based upon his corrupted or fallen nature. In Mormonism man has a free will.

Mormonism never bothers to define what it means by the term "free will". Mormonism complicates the problem further by not attempting to prove this belief in free will from scripture. Mormonism simply assumes that there is something called free will.

Man is dead spiritually. He does not desire the things of God. In fact God hates fallen man:

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Ps. 5:5

This Biblical teaching about God hating sinners is not popular in Mormonism or anywhere else today. Yet it is the teaching of scripture. God is a covenant God. He brings his covenantal curses upon covenant breakers. See Deut. 28:58-61. All men and women are covenant creatures. We are all covenant breakers outside of Christ. We are justly under God's covenantal curses. Sometimes these covenantal curses will take the form of God giving covenant breakers over into false religions. God even hides the truth from the wise. See Matt. 11:25 for scriptural proof of this.

"...God is angry with the wicked every day" Ps. 7:11. Fallen man can lay no claim on God's favor. Man's wickedness is often manifested as religious works. See Gen. 4:3. Cain offered a religious work, the fruit of his own hands. Adam and Eve tried to cover their nakedness with the works of their own hands. God did not accept Adam and Eve's hand-made coverings or Cain's offering of self-effort. Many man-made religions including Mormonism will dress themselves up such as Adam and Eve tried with outward religious trappings. These types of human works are filthy rags in God's eyes. Fallen man hates God and the things of God. Many fallen men seek to offend God by throwing humanistic religious works in God's face.

The Christian believes that fallen man is dead, and consequently cannot be free. The problem arises for

many people because they know that they make choices or decisions. Man most certainly does make choices. The question needs to be asked why do men choose one thing over another? The solution is found in man's nature. Fallen man makes decisions that are the result of the desires of his nature. Why does man reject the Biblical God? Men do this because it is his nature to do so. Man chooses in harmony with his nature. Romans tells us the following:

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey,  
his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death,  
or of obedience unto righteousness? Ro. 6:16

Verse fourteen of this chapter says of those in Christ that we are no longer under the dominion of sin. We were the servant or slaves of sin. We yielded ourselves to sin because this was the inclination of our fallen nature. We are now the servants of righteousness and no longer the slaves of sin. Our sin natures have been changed. As the apostle Peter tells us that "ye might be partakers of the divine nature..." II Peter 1:4. The believer now has a new nature.

We still make choices or decisions. Since we have a new nature our desires have been changed. We are now slaves of righteousness. Both the non-believer and the believer make choices but either a corrupt nature or a changed nature determines them. The believer is now a new creation in Christ. When a person chooses Christ, one must ask, why did the person do this? Was it ultimately his decision completely on his own? Does God get any credit for this decision? In passages that we will survey below on the subject of election it will be easy to see that man acts or chooses for Christ only after he has been acted upon by the Holy Spirit. Unbelievers have hearts of stone. Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit changes our heart of stone to a heart of flesh. Unbelievers are dead spiritually. Christ quickens us or makes us alive. We are risen from the dead when Christ regenerates us. Christ gets the credit for our decision to believe in Him. Unbelievers do not choose Christ, because they hate him. Their natures are corrupt and they freely choose in harmony with that nature to reject Christ.

In the section dealing with the Christian view of election we will look at scriptures that prove that God acts upon some in a favorable. Others are passed by. Why? Those who are passed by have no claim on God since their own sin condemns them. Those who are passed by get what they justly deserve. The believer gets something that is not deserved: God's unmerited favor. Who can lay claim to anything from God?

This doctrine is referred to as unconditional election. This means that man does not meet conditions in order to be elected to salvation. God does not look forward in time and on the basis of some foreseen work on the part of man elect him to salvation. If this were so, it could be said the God elects men after seeing them do something. God then would be responding to man's action. Salvation or election would be a debt that God owed to man.

Other fallen men have set up their own private religion in which they are the standard or god of their own making. By rejecting God and his word as the standard of truth and righteousness men justly deserve his wrath. Mormonism does this very thing. Mormonism in a collectivist fashion sets man up

as the ultimate standard. The "old man in Salt Lake"<sup>24</sup> is the Mormon version of fallen man insisting on being the standard of truth. Mormons are told in essence, just listen to that guy (the prophet).

Because Mormonism rejects God's revelation concerning the fall, and man's nature, it is no wonder that the Mormon salvation plan is a system of works. This will be seen more clearly as we look at the Mormon view of election. We will see that election within Mormonism is dependent upon man's action. Man acts, then God helps.

## **2. Election:**

### **Election: The Mormon View**

The Mormon view is an outright rejection of Biblical truth. Man in the Mormon system is ultimately responsible for his salvation. Man must do something, then God will act. Election in Mormonism is the result of the Mormon god looking forward in time and seeing man's efforts then accordingly electing him. The cause is man's work or contribution. Man's self effort is the cause of God's foreordination or election. This is not foreordination or election at all in the Biblical sense of the terms. There is no true grace in the Mormon system since it is earned or given in response to man's actions or withheld as a result of inaction.

Let us survey some Mormon writers to see exactly their concept of election or foreordination. The first person we will consider is James E. Talmage. Talmage has the following to say concerning this subject:

Foreordination takes into consideration repentance, faith, and obedience on the part of man...<sup>25</sup>

Talmage is more careful than most Mormon writers in trying to do justice to certain biblical doctrines. Nevertheless, he clearly connects "repentance, faith, and obedience" on man's part with foreordination. It should be noted that Talmage later in his comments on this topic tries to preserve God's independence, but unsuccessfully so. Talmage's semi-pelagianism destroys God's independence. If God takes into account certain actions on the part of man, then foreordination loses its meaning. Foreordination that operates after taking into account man's actions is not foreordination at all. It is rather something granted to man as a result of his works.

Brigham Young, in one of his sermons, states his belief that God responds to man's efforts:

My faith is, when we have done all we can, then the Lord is under obligation...<sup>26</sup>

Young is quite clear that God has to work after man first works. Grace defined biblically cannot exist in this type of theology. We will now consider three quotations from Bruce R. McConkie:

As with every basic doctrine of the gospel, the Lord's system of election [is] sic. based on pre-existent faithfulness has been changed and perverted by an apostated Christendom.<sup>27</sup>

By their foreordination the Lord merely gives them the opportunity to serve him and his purposes if they will choose to measure up to the standard he knows they are capable of attaining.<sup>28</sup>

Predestination is the false doctrine that from all eternity God has ordered whatever comes to pass, having especial and particular reference to the salvation or damnation of souls. Some souls, according to this false concept, are irrevocably chosen for salvation, others for damnation; and there is said to be nothing any individual can do to escape his predestined inheritance in heaven or in hell as the case many be.<sup>29</sup>

Its quite clear that McConkie does not accept predestination, or foreordination unless it is based upon man's works. Since McConkie rejects the biblical teaching concerning man's fall and sin he can see no reason for the entire human race to be sentenced to hell. Predestination is God electing out of the mass of fallen men a great multitude of people to receive salvation based entirely upon God's free choice. Those who go to hell get what they deserve. The gospel is offered to them sincerely. They are free to choose the gospel or reject it. They reject it of their own choice because their natures are fallen or corrupt.

McConkie is a pelagian as seen from his belief that foreordination is simply giving man the opportunity to save himself. God according to McConkie knows that man is capable of attaining salvation. All man has to do in McConkie's system is measure up to the standard that man is capable of attaining. It is interesting that McConkie and Talmage seem to disagree on this subject. Talmage appears to teach something very close to semi-pelagianism while McConkie is clearly a pelagian. Both positions are clearly heresy. Let us consider McConkie's father-in-law to see another view on this subject:

No person is ever predestined to salvation or damnation. Every person has free agency.<sup>30</sup>

The gospel of Christ is the gospel of mercy. It is also, the gospel of justice. It must be so, for it comes from a God of mercy, not from a cruel monster, who as some religionists still believe and declare: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death."<sup>31</sup>

Smith makes a caricature of the position he rejects. Because Smith does not have a Biblical view of man's depravity he cannot accurately judge the doctrine he is rejecting. It is entirely probable that Smith

himself does not even understand the belief that he is rejecting. The overwhelming majority of Mormons have never read an exegetical defense of the Christian beliefs that they reject. It is clear that Smith and his son-in-law believe that man has ability to effect his own salvation.

Words such as predestination should be interpreted in light of Biblical teaching. Instead, Mormonism, which is governed by rationalism, rejects God's word. What does the Bible say about this subject? It will be easy to see a vast difference between Scripture and Mormonism. The reader should keep this issue before him concerning the cause of election. Is election caused by an act of man or the free act of God? Does God elect after seeing man's faith, repentance, or willingness? If God elects after man contributes something is this a works form of salvation?

In light of the above teaching from scripture concerning man's depravity, what good thing could man contribute? Are man's seemingly good works motivated from false motives?

There are many passages of scripture that teach man's responsibility for his actions. Do these scriptures conflict with passages that teach God's unconditional election? How? If someone holds scripture to the standard of human reason what doctrines will be rejected? Many such as Bertrand Russell rejected all of scripture using this method. What will prevent men like Peter C. Appleby from eventually doing the same? Should men hold to man as the ultimate standard of human reason? Has human reason been affected by sin? If so, is human reason an infallible guide? Can both human responsibility and unconditional election both be true? If not, why not? Do these teachings contradict each other? Are they contradictory to God? Do Mormon leaders who reject unconditional election ever demonstrate an ability to interpret the Bible exegetically?

What part does man play in his election? Does God act freely, or does he respond after man makes his contribution? If man causes God to elect, how many works are needed to obtain election? Are faith and repentance gifts from God? If they are gifts from God, how can they be the cause of election in man? Why do men want to contribute their own works toward salvation? Is it sinful to do this?

We will now consider some of the Biblical passages concerning election. Try and keep in mind some of the questions that have been raised about the relationship of man's works and election. Do Mormons agree with the following scriptures?

### **Election: The Christian View**

And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the LORD will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. Num. 16:5

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. I Kings 19:18

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. Ps. 65:4

O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. Ps. 105:6

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. Ps. 110:3

The Preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD. Prov. 16:1

LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. Isa. 26:12

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Isa. 43:25

O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Jer. 10:23

I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Jer. 31:18,19

In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve. Jer. 50:20

Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned: renew our days as of old. Lam. 5:21

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Eze. 36:26,27



For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they deceive the very elect....And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matt. 24:24,31

And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. Mark 13:20

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will no wise cast out....And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day....No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day....And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. John 6:37,39,40,44,65

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scriptures may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. John 13:18

Ye have not chosen me, But I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. John 15:16

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. John 17:9

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Acts 16:14

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be

conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.... Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Rom. 8:29,33

And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. Rom. 9:23

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Rom. 11:7

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will....In whom also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Eph. 1:4,5,11

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. I Thess. 1:4

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thess. 5:9

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. II Thess. 2:13

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. I Tim. 5:21

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. II Tim. 1:9

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. II Tim. 2:10

Paul, A servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. Titus 1:1

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. I Peter 1:2

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. I Peter 2:9

The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. I Peter 5:13

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundations of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and in not and yet is. Rev. 17:8

### **3. The Atonement:**

#### **The Atonement: The Mormon View**

We will consider a couple Mormon quotations that are representative of Mormonism in general. As will be seen, these two Mormon quotes clearly place Mormonism into the stream of Universalism. It is clear that Mormonism believes that the extent of the atonement is universal in scope. It must be remembered that Mormonism teaches universal salvation for all people except for a very small number who will end up with the Devil.

Even people who reject Christ by embracing false religions will be saved according to Mormonism's false view of the atonement. All people, they say, are saved by Christ's atonement irrespective of personal beliefs. The works aspect of Mormonism is seen in their belief of works for eternal life, i.e., attaining godhood. Everyone gets some measure of salvation because of Christ's universal atonement. Eternal exaltation for the Mormon is determined solely on the basis of man's own efforts.

It is a damnable heresy to teach that all will attain some measure of salvation because of the supposed universal extent of the atonement. Let us consider what Joseph F. Smith had to say about the extent of the atonement:

Also, through the atonement, not only Adam, but all his posterity were redeemed from the temporal effects of the fall, and shall come forth in the resurrection to receive immortality.<sup>32</sup>

Immortality is the opposite of eternal death. In historic Christianity eternal life is the same as immortality. The apostle Paul proves this clearly in the following passage:

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed in victory. Rom. 15:53,54

This blessing comes only on those who believe. It is not indiscriminate in its extent. Paul is speaking to believers in these passages. This is proved from verse fifty in which Paul is addressing "brethren."

Let us consider James E. Talmage writing concerning this topic. Talmage has this to say:

The extent of the atonement is universal, applying alike to all descendants of Adam. Even the unbeliever, the heathen, and the child who dies before reaching the years of discretion, all are redeemed by the Savior's self-sacrifice from the the individual consequences of the fall.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear that Talmage believes in the universal extent of the atonement. He says that unbelievers and the heathen are redeemed by Christ's sacrifice. Redemption in historic Christianity means salvation or having the gift of eternal life. Talmage says everyone is redeemed by Christ's sacrifice. Is this Biblical?

It should be noted that Mormon universalism is different from the version promoted by modern day semi-pelagians. Semi-pelagians however are in somewhat of a dilemma. They too believe in a universal atonement, and as a result cannot effectively challenge the Mormon view. The semi-pelagian believes that the atonement is universal. Man cannot receive the benefits of the atonement unless he first does something, namely, believe. The Mormon also believes that man must do something if he wants to obtain eternal exaltation. Both positions in reality are very close.

The Scriptures cited in the next section will clearly refute the Mormon view along with the semi-pelagian, i.e., Arminian position. If one accepts the idea that the atonement is universal it is impossible to escape the conclusion that everyone is saved. Mormons are more consistent than Arminians. Mormon universalism makes for an attractive man pleasing theology. The question is asked again: Is this position Biblical?

In the scriptures that follow it will be seen clearly that the atonement is particular. It is limited to those for whom it was designed. God certainly has a design or plan. It should be remembered that no one is able to lay any claim upon God for salvation. All men are by nature children of wrath and therefore unworthy of anything except eternal judgement. If it were God's design to save all men there is no doubt that all would be saved. The scriptures teach that not all men will be saved. Some ask, "why are not all saved?" This is the wrong question. The question that should be asked, is "why are any saved?" No one deserves salvation. All deserve death. We have all

earned it. Death is the wages of sin. When one keeps asking, "why are not all saved?", one must conclude this is the result of a deficient view of sin.

We prefer to leave this question to the secret counsel of God. See Deut. 29:29. We stand in awe that God according to his marvelous grace has found a way to save any. Praise be His Name!

### **The Atonement: The Christian View**

The word atonement covers words that we find in scripture such as: redemption, redeem, purchase, satisfy, propitiation, and ransom. The atonement is a historic fact. It is something that is objectively real. It is a completed accomplished fact. The atonement has a specific design to it. It is limited to whom it is designed for. The following scriptures prove what is known as particular redemption:

He was taken from prison and from judgement: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. Isa. 53:8

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matt. 1:21

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matt. 20:28

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Matt. 26:28

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. John 10:14,15

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word....I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.... And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them....And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth....Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.... Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. John 17:6,9,10,19,20,24

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Ro. 8:32

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. II Cor. 5:21

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Eph. 1:7

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ, also loved the church, and gave himself for it. Eph. 5:25

In the above verses it is quite clear that the design of the atonement was particular or limited. Christ died for his people the church. In John chapter seventeen, the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ was restricted to his people. It was not a universal prayer for every person on earth. This doctrine of limited or particular atonement may be an emotional shock to some. What must be determined however, is if this teaching is scriptural? It should be noted that Mormons do not attempt to prove their concept of a universal atonement from scripture. They assume their position to be true and then fall back on emotionalism when challenged.

I would encourage the reader to consult John Owen's *The Death of Christ*. This work has never been refuted by any type of universalist, Mormon or Arminian. Consider just one argument in Owen's work:

The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either: 1. All the sins of all men. 2. All the sins of some men, or 3. Some of the sins of all men. In which case it may be said: a. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved. b. That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, and this is the truth c. But if the first be the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer, Because of unbelief. I ask, Is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for all their sins!<sup>34</sup>

It may be objected that this is a logical argument. It should be noted that an objection of this nature does not disprove the argument. Owen's work is the most thorough Biblical examination of this subject ever printed. Mormon and Arminian claims of ignorance concerning the existence of this work is not a

substitute for refuting it.

We will now consider the subject of grace. Can it be resisted or not?

#### 4. Irresistible Grace:

##### **Irresistible Grace:** The Mormon View

How is grace defined in Mormonism? Is it defined as unmerited favor? Or is it something that man works for? If man works to obtain it, can it be called grace? The answer to this question is obvious. We will consider three quotations from Bruce R. McConkie:

Grace is granted to men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness that are part of the gospel plan.<sup>35</sup>

Conditional or individual salvation, that which comes by grace coupled with gospel obedience, consists in receiving an inheritance in the celestial kingdom of God. <sup>36</sup>

However, one of the untrue doctrines found in modern Christendom is the concept that man can gain salvation (meaning in the kingdom of God) by grace alone...Salvation in the celestial kingdom of God, however, is not salvation by grace alone.<sup>37</sup>

In these quotations one can see clearly Mormonism's two tier or first class and second rate salvation schemes. God's grace is insufficient to bring men into the kingdom of God. Man according to McConkie must do something. Man must add his works. If man has to add something, then it follows that man can resist. Man can withhold his works. Grace is not grace in this system, and it can be resisted.

What does the *Book Of Mormon* say concerning this matter? In II Nephi we find the following:

For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God, for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.<sup>38</sup>

This is a rather incredible statement. It would be impossible to know if you could be saved. How can a man know that if he had done all that he could do? When would grace kick in? Let us look at another Mormon book to see if this concept appears elsewhere:

For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of

allowance; Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven.<sup>39</sup>

We see this same idea again, namely, man must work to receive forgiveness.

Let us look at another passage from the *Doctrine And Covenants*:

For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father, therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace.<sup>40</sup>

This continues the Mormon concept of meeting conditions in order to obtain grace. Grace is not grace within this system. Grace is merited in Mormonism. If meeting conditions attains grace, then it follows that man can choose to do nothing. Grace in this system is not irresistible. Grace does not transform or change the sinner. It is not effective. When considering Mormonism's universal scheme, we find that grace is further distorted into a heretical doctrine. Within Mormonism's conditional exaltation scheme the definition of grace is radically redefined into something meaningless.

### **Irresistible Grace: The Christian View**

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with thy soul, that thou mayest live. Deut. 30:6

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them. Eze. 36:26,27

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. John 5:21

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. John 17:2

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord open, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Acts 16:14



Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. II Cor. 5:17,18

And You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.... Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in heavenly with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) Eph. 2:1,5

Notice the words and phrases in these passages. Words such as "circumcise", "give", "put", "opened her heart", "gives life", "ordained", "believed", "he made alive", "all this is from God", and "you hath He quickened". These verses clearly teach that God's action or his work is the responsible agent for our conversion. Remember that the prophet Ezekiel teaches we had hearts of stone before our conversion. The apostle Paul teaches that we were slaves in bondage to sin. Dead people are incapable of responding to anyone. God's action for us is effective. God works and sinners are converted. This is the plain teaching of the above scriptures. Can believers be lost? Mormons and Arminians both believe this to be the case. Do believers stay in a state of grace by their own efforts, such as holding on to God? Does God hold on to the believer? Will He ever let go? Can the Holy Spirit continue to keep our hearts soft? Remember God the Holy Spirit softened our hearts in the first place. We will now consider the subject of perseverance.

## **5. Perseverance:**

### **Perseverance: The Mormon View**

We will now survey several quotations that are relevant to this discussion. We will see that perseverance in Mormonism is completely dependent upon man's effort. It should be remembered that as far as Mormon universalism is concerned nearly everyone would attain some measure of salvation. Concerning Mormon exaltation this is contingent completely upon man's works. Mormon exaltation means attaining a position in the kingdom of God. In historic Christianity, being in God's eternal kingdom is being saved.

Let us now look at two passages from Mormon scriptures. The first passage glories in man's free will and the important role it plays in attaining eternal life or choosing death:

...free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon...And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death...<sup>41</sup>

But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart

from the living God.<sup>42</sup>

The two above quotations clearly leave open the possibilities that men may fall from grace. This possibility is contingent upon man's alleged free will. Mormons never prove this alleged free will from scripture, let alone bothering to define the term. Bruce R. McConkie has more to say on this subject:

Even sanctified persons, however, have no absolute guarantee that they will be saved.<sup>43</sup>

This says much about McConkie's god. Apparently this Mormon god cannot guarantee salvation to anyone. Brigham Young continues this idea:

...for if you are the elect, it would be a great pity to have you led astray to destruction.<sup>44</sup>

These brief quotations should make it clear that there is no guarantee that anyone who is elect can stay in grace and be eternally saved. What does the Bible say about this topic?

### **Perseverance: The Christian View**

In this section we will look at a number of scriptural passages. These scriptures clearly teach the preservation of God's elect people. The great God who opens and softens hearts, bringing men to conversion can surely hold on to men and keep them in grace, grace being a gift and not something earned. There are grace gifts such as faith and repentance. Men exercise faith and repentance, but they are clearly God's gifts.

God is our strong tower. He has hedged us about with protection from the outside. He has graciously placed his Holy Spirit within us to protect us, even from ourselves. God has guaranteed the salvation of his elect people by the fact that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession". We are God's possession. We have the earnest money, God's down payment, the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that He would never leave us or forsake us. We will never leave Him because He is faithful and will protect us even from ourselves.

Consider the overwhelming evidence from scripture:

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Ps. 1:3

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Ps. 34:7

For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide

even unto death. Ps. 48:14

They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever. Ps. 125:1,2

The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands. Ps. 138:8

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. Isa. 54:10

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Jer. 32:40

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. Hos. 2:19,20

How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not away. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Matt. 18:12-14

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Matt. 24:24

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life... John 3:36

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst... John 4:14

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. John 5:24

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:39,40

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. John 10:28,29

...that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. John 13:1

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. John 14:16

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Rom. 5:8-10

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:1

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8:38,39

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Rom. 11:29

Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. I Cor. 1:8,9

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. I Cor. 10:13

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. II Cor. 4:14

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will....ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Eph. 1:5,13,14

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:6

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col. 3:3,4

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. I Thess. 5:23,24

But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. II Thess. 3:3

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever Amen. II Tim. 4:18

...having obtained eternal redemption for us....And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Heb. 9:12,15

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. 10:14

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Heb. 12:28

Who [believers] are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I Peter 1:5

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the of the Son of God. I John 5:13

...to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in JesusChrist, and called.... Jude 1:1 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Jude 1:24

For the diligent reader it should be abundantly clear that Mormonism is vastly different from the teaching of the Bible. The Mormon god is finite and thus unable to actually save anyone. The heresy of Mormon universalism is in direct opposition to the teaching of scripture. Almost everyone in this system attains some form of salvation. To obtain first class salvation in Mormonism one has to contribute his own good works. How many works does one have to produce?

In the next section of this work we will briefly look at the biblical requirements of the office of apostle. Mormon apostles will be shown to be imposters. Then our study will take us to the Mormon concept of the apostasy of the Christian Church.

## End notes

1. Francis Turrentin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Phillisburg, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), p. 251.
2. Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, (Salt Lake City, Eborn Books, 1990), p. 102,103.

3. Ibid., p. 117.
4. Ibid., p. 24.
5. Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses, Vol. Six*, (Liverpool, 1844), p. 6.
6. Ibid., 1860, p. 120.
7. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, (Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1979), p. 657.
8. Gary James Bergera, ed., "*Ominpotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience in Mormon Theology*", in *Line Upon Line*, (Salt Lake City, Signature Books 1989), p. 69.
9. Joseph Smith, *Pearl Of Great Price*, (Salt Lake City, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977), p. 36.
10. W. Cleon Skousen, *The First 2000 Years*, (Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 41st Printing, 1991), p. 354,355.
11. Gary James Bergera, ed., *Line Upon Line*, p. 69,70.
12. Gary James Bergera, ed., p. 74.
13. Ibid., "*The Concept of a Finite God as an Adequate Object of Worship*", p. 79.
14. Ibid., "*Finitist Theology and the Problem of Evil*", p. 86-88.
15. Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation*, (Jefferson, Trinity, 1986), p. 232,233.
16. Joseph F. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. One*, (Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1990), p. 112,113,114.
17. Joseph F. Smith, *Vol. Two*, 1989, p. 50,51.
18. James E. Talmage, *Articles Of Faith*, (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Co. 1988), p. 428.

19. Joseph F. Smith, *Vol. One*, p. 126,127.
20. LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work And A Wonder*, (Salt Lake City, Desret Book Co. 1978), p. 345,347.
21. Talmage, *Articles*, p. 97.
22. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*, (Phillipsburg, P&R, 1959), p. 74,75.
23. Personal letter to this writer dated November 14, 1992. Mr. Midgley had made the accusation that Augustine using Greek philosophy imported the doctrine of original sin into Christianity. He had received John Murray's work to refute in light of his accusation. Rather than exegetically refute Murray, Midgley engaged in a personal attack.
24. This is a term that I have coined to point out the present leadership crises within Mormonism. The leadership structure since it is unbiblical is doomed to having an increasingly older and older man at the helm. The Mormon prophet is picked from the senior most members of the apostles. In the future unless something is done the Mormon leader will always be in his eighties. His messages in the Ensign Magazine will be old speeches that have been updated and reworked by a staff worker.
25. Talmage, p. 441.
26. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses, Vol. Four*, (Liverpool, 1857), p. 91.
27. McConkie, p. 216.
28. McConkie, p. 588.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
30. Joseph F. Smith, *Vol. One* p. 61.
31. *Ibid.*, *Vol. Three* p. 286,287.
32. *Ibid.*, *Vol. One* p. 112.
33. Talmage, p. 77.
34. John Owen, *The Death of Christ*, (The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Penn. 1978), p. 173,174.



35. McConkie, p. 339.

36. Ibid., p. 669.

37. Ibid., p. 671.

38. Joseph Smith, *Book Of Mormon*, (Salt Lake City The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1977), 2 Nephi, 25:23 p. 92.

39. Joseph Smith, *Doctrine And Covenants*, (Salt Lake City, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1977), 1:31,32 p. 3.

40. *Doctrine And Covenants*, 93:20 p. 159.

41. *Book Of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 2:26,27 p. 55.

42. D&C 20:32

43. McConkie, p. 676.

44. Brigham Young, J.O.D. Vol. 6, p. 45.