

THROUGH THE MAZE

To Sharon with Love

Starting with the first week in July, I began corresponding through email with a young woman from Utah. Her struggle is very painful yet it is very typical of what many Latter-day Saints have to go through on their way out. In fact, it may be premature to actually say Sharon is out. As you will see, one of the emotions people trying to leave Mormonism go through (along with fear and confusion) is vacillation.

Sharon asks excellent questions. Questions I think every exiting True-believer Mormon asks. These questions must, eventually be answered. And that is what this ministry is about—providing tapes, books, and—in some cases—correspondence with those who are attempting to find their way out. (In this regard, *Through the Maze Ministry* is somewhat different from other “cult-buster” organizations. I have little time for intellectual discussions with Mormons who are not interested in examining, at a deep level, their faith. I do not engage in sparring and jousting with such people. I am not interested in winning arguments, but in winning people to Christ. Good steward-

ship compels me to leave fruitless verbal combat to others more suited to it.

At any rate here is some and I emphasize *some* of my correspondence with Sharon. Our emails ran to more than 15,000 words. As you read this material ask yourself “How would I have answered Sharon’s questions?” I have taken the liberty of editing this material for clarity, but it accurately portrays the sense of the correspondence. I have added explanatory notes inside [brackets]. Also, to protect the family’s privacy, I have not revealed the names of the rest of her family nor the Utah town where she lives. Finally, forgive the smaller than usual type. It is the only way I can begin to get the gist of this in our limited space.

Finally, as you follow Sharon’s struggle, I hope you will begin to understand how powerful Mormonism is and how brave and courageous are those who escape it.

Mr. Spencer.

I’m a confused LDS person searching for answers. Why, I wonder, did

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Holy Murder: Polygamy’s Blood

“I couldn’t put it down!”

I have been very encouraged by the response I am getting from readers of my new book. You can read some of their letters on the back page of this newsletter.

The most common comment I get is something like “I just couldn’t put this book down.” That is followed by “When will you write the sequel?”

Mormon leaders say the Church has “renounced polygamy.” That could not be further from the truth. The practice is only temporarily suspended and will live on, Mormon doctrine tells us, into eternity.

Until the Mormon Church really renounces this practice, I will continue to speak out against both polygamy and the Mormonism that fosters it. ■



A minister I am proud of

Eric Barger (www.EricBarger.com) is a man I have known for more than twenty years. He has traversed the United States and Canada ministering to huge crowds and to tiny groups. His ministry, Take a Stand!, has focused his ministry in the area of the Occult and New Age Movements. Like me, he is interested in Mormonism and the other “nonChristian Cults.”

I’d like you to get to know some-

thing about this man I consider a partner in ministry. He has written several excellent books which I will tell you more about if you will check the box marked “Send me info on Eric,” on the purple card which accompanies this newsletter. If you do that I will send you two of Eric’s articles: “9 Practices of the Occult” and “Halloween—This Trick is No Treat!” ■



To Sharon with Love....

God create mankind, and I wonder what we are all going to do in eternity in heaven. I have to admit that the Mormon doctrine of Eternal Progression sounds like the solution to this one. Let me know what you think please.

Sharon

To Sharon,
Sharon,

Thanks for the question regarding Eternal Progression [The Mormon idea that men and women progress to become “gods and goddesses”]. I’ll take a stab at it.

As you know, Mormonism teaches that God (Eloheim or Heavenly Father) was created by a father and a mother, and that he had a grandfather, great-grandfather, etc. That is the essence of Eternal Progression. That means that, basically, you and I are the same kind of being God is, just behind Him in development.

The basic problem with that is that if the Mormon gods had to be men and had to “progress to godhood,” then where did the *first* god come from? Didn’t *he* have to be a man? And who made him if there were no God in the universe? The Bible teaches us that God is utterly unique in the Universe. He is a self-existent Being, nobody made Him. He made everything else, including men and women. For Mormonism, it is the material universe, and not God, that is self-existent, Men evolved out of matter and progressed to godhood. That is so *backwards* to the biblical revelation.

You might want to look at my chapter on the Nature of God, which you can read online at my website, mazeministry.com.

Some reading ideas for you:

The Gospel of John (particularly chapter three);

The short Book of Galatians;

The first eight chapters of the Book of Romans.

God bless you, Sharon. May He help you in your search for meaning and into a

relationship with Jesus.

Jim Spencer

From Sharon
Hi,

Thanks for writing back—I’m amazed that you did. I’ve asked questions on other sites and they don’t even acknowledge me. Anyway, I was wondering if there is no Eternal Progression then what will happen to us? Doesn’t the Bible say anything about what we’ll be doing in heaven? Do we work, learn, play? Just wondering. I can’t find anything except it says we will be happy.

Thanks,
Sharon

To Sharon
Sharon,

You know, we really *don’t* know too much about heaven except, as you say, that it will be happy. I am trusting that the

I think you know how I feel. I’m scared to death. My husband has been good about it and even takes me to a Calvary Chapel here but we go to [the Mormon] Sacrament Meeting first.

I feel so much more welcome at the Christian church. I want my family to leave Mormonism with me if I get out.

It’s just horrible to think Mormonism is all a lie. I feel like I’ve read so much stuff I can’t stand anymore but where do I find the truth.

Little things are making me think I was nuts to ever question the LDS church and then I start reading in the Bible and start swinging the other way. Good grief! Thanks for listening to me babble. If you have any answers let me know.

Sharon

To Sharon
Sharon,

I can’t remember if you read my book, *Beyond Mormonism: An Elder’s Story*, online. In it I tell how I got out.

I’m sending you my tapes on the Trinity, one of my favorite subjects.

Have you seen the video *DNA vs The Book of Mormon*? It is available online at: www.mormonchallenge.com.

Is your husband a Mormon?

Jim Spencer

From Sharon
Hi,

I just read your online book it was really helpful. It’s such a hard decision to make—getting out of the Mormon Church. My husband is also Mormon and we both have been for life. My family has been Mormon since Joseph Smith’s days and my husband’s at least four generations. We were married in the temple and have been very active.

It’s just so awful to think it’s all a lie. Then we feel guilty for even *looking* at the problems within the Church. Taking that step where you take off your garments and say “I’m out” is scary. Not to mention telling any family. I know you know what I’m talking about

“I feel so much more welcome at the Christian church. I want my family to leave Mormonism with me if I get out. It’s just horrible to think Mormonism is all a lie.”

God Who made me, loves me, and saved me from myself, will have something good:

1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

p.s. I could probably do better on another question.

Jim Spencer

From Sharon

Your answer sounds pretty good to me. I’m so dang confused it’s pathetic! I’m still trying to figure out if Joseph Smith was a prophet or not. I’m beginning to think he made up the Book of Mormon. How the heck did you figure it all out? I just don’t want to make a mistake.

Thanks for your help and for listening to me whine.

To Sharon
Sharon,

Whine away! No problem. If I can help in any way, let me know. A great move to Calvary Chapel.

Jim Spencer

From Sharon

I wish I had the guts to just get the heck out. Did your wife have this kind of trouble? I can see why people think it's a cult.

From Sharon
Hi,

I just read a letter from your site that talked about the prayer they say in the temple [Referring to the *Pay Lay Ale Prayer* which was removed in 1990]—oh my heck! Do you think it's true—I've been in there hundreds of times too and I was there when they did the penalties (we were married in 1983). But the implications of the prayer are just horrible. It's getting harder and harder to stay in this Church!

Thanks for all your support and help.

To Sharon

Take a look at my book *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*. You can read it online at my site.

From Sharon

Holy cow! I'm terrified now. I have to go talk to my husband and tell him to read it too. He's kinda defensive about the Church he is a returned missionary. I am sick about this.

Thanks,
Sharon

To Sharon

You may want to digest some of this before you hit your husband with it all.

From Sharon

Hi,

I have a question for you. I still can't shake the belief in the preexistence [The Mormon idea that we had existence in

heaven before we were born on earth]. . . Is there any explanation for this? There is so much about the earth we don't know and all the weird things that happen, Is it the devil trying to deceive? If you have any answers let me know. No one has any so far.

Sharon

"Your answer sounds pretty good to me. I'm so dang confused it's pathetic! I'm still trying to figure out if Joseph Smith was a prophet or not."

To Sharon,

I can't answer why you have had the feelings you have. The psychological landscape is quite misunderstood.

So, I have to go to what I *do* know. And that is that we were created at conception by a joint action of our parents and God. Our parents created our physical body, and God created our spirit. God said He created Adam's body physically and then breathed into him the breath of life and at that time Adam became a living soul. So Adam was not a living soul in heaven before: he became a living soul at his "birth," as do all humans at our births.

The biggest problem Mormonism has is mixing up God, angels, and men. From Mormonism's perspective, they are all the same kind of beings. But the Bible clearly indicates that there is only One God. Angels are not, and never will be men, and men will never be angels, they are two different orders of creation.

The one limp Bible reference Mormonism uses to bolster this preexistence idea is found in Jeremiah 15: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." But this only points to the infinite knowledge of God who "knows the end from the beginning."

A rule that must be followed when making doctrinal pronouncements is that

we can believe only what is clearly taught in scripture. We can't take out-of-context statements and make them into full-blown doctrines. Two such examples are the Mormon doctrines of "Three Heavens" and that of "Men may become Gods."

[At this point I sent Sharon several web addresses to study this out fully]

Keep studying, but don't drive yourself crazy. What happens is that we get our brains so boiled that we think we can go make a case to our spouse or the bishop or some Church leader and they will "get it." Nope! They will not! They have not walked through everything you have. So they question your "spirituality" your "lack of faith." They say your problem is that you are reading "apostate material." Under such

assault, you are tempted to just give up. But, if you take it slower, and let this stuff simmer, you will begin to see how consistent the Bible is and how inconsistent Mormonism is. Then, rather than being angry and frustrated when they "don't get it," you will have compassion, confidence, and peace.

Anyway, you are doing the right thing to get the information.

Jim Spencer

From Sharon

Hi,

I'm feeling that brain boil today. I almost feel like staying where I am because there is truth everywhere and nowhere and it's as good where I'm at as anywhere else. My husband wants me to go talk to some guy . . . I think my husband is hoping to put Humpty-Dumpty back together [Note: This is my favorite line from Sharon's emails] and I'm not sure it can ever happen. It's having the affect on me that I just want to believe in God and not bother with churches at all.

What a mess I've gotten myself into!
Thanks for listening.

Sharon

To Sharon

Sharon,

Yep, you are in the soup, that's for sure. I guess there is no way of doing this

without pain. That is what keeps me in the game—my anger at Mormonism for doing all this to its people. I will pray for you to have courage and stamina, now that you have begun the fight. It will probably get worse before it gets better.

Remember: you are not looking for a religion—you are looking for Jesus! A relationship. Church organization means nothing. The Church of Christ is the Body of Christ—all the born again believers who are alive or who have lived. Local churches are important because they provide worship, Bible teaching, and fellowship. But church membership has nothing to do with spirituality. I would hope that maybe you could struggle less with Mormonism and go to the Calvary Chapel and just listen. Time and patience.

Talking to the guy you mention is probably a waste of time and opportunity for more confusion.

Remember, you are not looking for a church, you are looking for God.

Jim

From Sharon

I just wanted to tell you I loved your tapes you sent, they were really helpful the Trinity is much clearer for me. I have also read all the books and seen the videos. I love how you can write from the LDS perspective it really helps to not feel defensive as I study this all out. Because of your material my husband will actually look at it instead of just pushing it aside. Like I said we are nearing the end of this journey through hell. I feel like I have just bombarded you with all my problems and questions and I wanted you to know you have truly helped us both.

Love,
Sharon

From Sharon

Hi,

My sister in law is having a hard time with the eternal marriage issue and I can only find two verses
Matt 22:30 and Mark 12:25 she wants to prove to her husband that there is no such

thing as eternal marriage. Can you give me anymore verses? She says he will say that it says after the resurrection so if your sealed you will be sealed. That's exactly what I thought too but I know I read other things to get to where I am with

"It's just so awful to think it's all a lie. Then we feel guilty for even looking at the problems within the Church. Taking that step where you take off your garments and say "I'm out" is scary."

it. I think I've read so much I can't remember where to go look it up.

Any suggestions would be great.

Thanks,
Sharon

To Sharon

Sharon,

Aha, back to the hard questions!

No easy answer here. Mormonism's position is so unique here that its uniqueness itself is a key to the answer. But it isn't an *easy* answer. Mormonism does not hesitate to rush in where wise men will not go: to make pronouncements about the future condition of men and women in heaven in spite of the fact that the Bible doesn't tell us all the answers. And, of course, you cannot corner Mormonism by argument: it is like trying to nail water to a wall.

But, consider:

1Co 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

So the Apostle Paul, and the Church of his time, had no such idea as eternal marriage. They do not mention it. Beyond that, Paul says, if your hubby dies, marry someone else if you like. Would he say that if the Church commonly believed that there was some kind of eternal marriage vow. Would he so lightly counsel widows to remarry without *a single word* of caution. He did *not* say, "Re-

marry, unless you are married for time and eternity." So, let's say a Mormon woman is sealed in the temple. Her husband dies, so she remarries. Then *he* dies, so she marries again, etc. Well, isn't this the very question the scribes asked Jesus to answer, "Whose will she be in the resurrection?" He said *nobody's!* No ifs ands or buts—nobody's period.

So Jesus didn't know about "celestial marriage," and neither did Paul.

Jim

From Sharon

If Peter had the authority to bind and loose on earth and in heaven what was that verse talking about? I was just thinking about that. I think that's one of the reasons the LDS Church thinks we have the authority (Peter, James and John conferring the Melchizedek priesthood on Joseph and Oliver) to seal in the temples.

To Sharon

Sharon,

Well, this one is pretty straight forward. It is recorded that Jesus said this twice:

First, to Peter:

Matthew 16:

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Notice that the antecedent of "this Rock" is not Peter, but *revelation*. In other

words He is saying to Peter, “The Revelation of My nature is the Rock upon which the Church is built.” The Church is made up of everyone who wakes up to Who Jesus is—those who become born again. It is important to see that Jesus is not saying, My Father has revealed this mystery to you and so I will build my Church on you. No, it is upon the Rock of Revelation.

The second instance really makes this make sense:

Matthew 18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But this is not said to Peter! Who is it said to? To answer that you must look at the beginning of the chapter:

Matthew 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Jesus is addressing “the disciples.” He tells them many things in this chapter. And in verse 18 He says:

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This promise of power in the Name of Jesus is to all Believers:

See John 1:12

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:”

And again when Jesus ascends into heaven as recorded in Matt. 28, He says: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all na-

tions, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

It’s even more apparent in Mark, chapter 16:

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they

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cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

The signs shall follow “Them that believe.”

The power of God is given to all of us who are believers, who have the Holy Spirit living within them. We can pray, heal, cast out demons, bind, and loose (as we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit).

This was never just for Peter.

Hope that helps.

Jim

From Sharon
Hi,

Yeah it really does help. . . .

I just watched the video about the book of Abraham and I was talking to my husband about it. He thinks that they only show one side of the story. He said it could have been that the papyrus that Joseph translated the book from was the one in the fire and so we’ll never know. He gets me so confused sometimes. . . .

I just want this search to end!! It’s driving me nuts! One day he sounds like he’s decided the Church isn’t true and the next he’s trying to prove to me that it is. I know I went through it too but he fakes me out and just when I think I can make my own decision he brings something else up. . . . I sometimes think he could make me believe it all again and it just puts me back at square one. *Why doesn’t the Lord just show me something really concrete so I know?* It’s frustrating. There I’m done whining. Thanks for listening.

Love,
Sharon

To Sharon

Because you can’t get there intellectually. Your husband probably isn’t really, really interested at this point. You’ll make yourself crazy if your choices depend on him “getting it.”

The Bible says the unbelieving husband will be won by the godly behavior of his wife, not by browbeating him with

scripture. As I told you to tell your sister. Relax. Enjoy Jesus.

When I got saved and Margaretta went to a divorce lawyer to leave me. I complained to God and He told me: “There are no group plans or fleet rates. What will *you* do?” I had to say, “Though none go with me, still I will follow.”

You have to get there, too.

Even if you never make it out, I think the process you are going through, the questions you are asking, the intensity and honesty of your search, are very important for outside observers. Thanks for your permission.

And, I think you cannot help but find

your way because Jesus said:

Mt 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
Jim

From Sharon
Jim,

I know. Thanks for your patience. I have been talking to a real pushy Christian friend and she's wanting me to get baptized and on and on. My husband and I went out walking tonight and talked about the Church and he's still got questions. I wish he'd tell me what they were and I'd ask you but he didn't say what they were. He talks like he will be getting out but then not quite committing. Oh well I'll keep praying I know the Lord is leading.

Love,
Sharon

To Sharon

Baptism should definitely be a ways down the road.

That comes *after* you are *sure* what your position is. Your friend sounds like she has zeal but not wisdom. I have been part of the process of hundreds (if not thousands) of Latter-day Saints coming to the Lord. There is a place for aggressive witnessing, but when someone is going in the right direction, you let them take their time.

I would like to see you contact the couple I mentioned to you earlier. I think they will have a peace and patience that can only help you. You need patience, not pushy.

Jim

From Sharon
Hi,

Oh my gosh I can't believe you just sent this email! I am on line with her [the pushy one] right now and she is making me feel like telling her to go to hell! I just feel like crying and here you came. Thanks so much for listening to the Lord you came just in time.

Love,
Sharon

From Sharon
Hi, it's me again,

I was wondering about the priesthoods in the LDS Church. Were they part of the Bible times? It doesn't look like it was other than if you had the lineage of Aaron/Levites etc. What about the Melchizedek priesthood? If it's not from Bible times where did Joseph Smith come up with it? Also where did Joseph Smith get genealogy research from—even if you were supposed to baptize for the dead it looks like the pagans only baptized the direct family they knew not everyone in their line.

Love,
Sharon

To Sharon
Sharon,

The book of Hebrews is the book in the New Testament that is written to prove to the Jews (who were under the priesthood system as it was set forth in the Old Testament) that the priesthood system ended with Jesus. He is the Great High Priest and we all have direct, instantaneous access to Him. We come "boldly into the

sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

But, read the Book of Hebrews.

And for further study, go to my home page at: <http://www.mazeministry.com> and drop down to the Google window and type in "priesthood." You will find everywhere I mention it on my site.

Also, if you have not already, go to: <http://www.yrulds.com> I have a lot of stuff there.

So good to hear from you. Next week I start my new newsletter and I am planning to make it mainly your emails.

Humpty Dumpty can't be put back together.

Did you finish *Holy Murder*?

Jim

From Sharon
Hi,

I checked all the references out you gave me and it really helped. I'm going to tell my husband to do the same. I did finish *Holy Murder* and I loved it. . . . I sent my sister in law to the YRULDS site and also some Christian friends who don't know much about the Church it's a great site for telling a short version about Mormon beliefs. Thanks for everything.

Love,
Sharon

From Sharon
Jim,

I've been reading on [the web] about the First Vision discrepancies [She is referring to Joseph Smith's conflicting accounts of his supposed vision of God in the Palmyra, New York grove] and Mormonism is all starting to sound like it's true again. Why don't I find something that I can use to make a decision with? I've read probably 30 books plus studied parts of 20 more! What the hell is my problem???

How did you get comfortable with

"I'm feeling that brain boil today. I almost feel like staying where I am because there is truth everywhere and nowhere and it's as good where I'm at as anywhere else. My husband wants me to go talk to some guy I think my husband is hoping to put Humpty-Dumpty back together.

presence of God" because of his work.

We now are a "priesthood of believers." We all are priests in the sense that we represent God to those who do not know Him. We actually are much, much closer to God than a priest is: we are Sons (and Daughters) by way of adoption.

When Mormons ask me "Where do you get your authority?" I give them the short answer: John 1:12-13

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the

leaving and getting involved in a Christian church? I love Calvary and hate going to the Mormon Church I don't know why the sudden confusion. I've been trying to base my study on whether or not Joseph was a false prophet and thought I had it figured out. I know I don't believe in Blood Atonement or Adam-God theory. HELP! I'm nuts today! I'm making myself physically sick with this. . . . Thanks for listening once again. I'll probably feel stupid in half an hour because I wrote it.

Love,
Sharon

To Sharon
Sharon,

I think the key for you can be found in your phrase: "I love Calvary and hate going to the Mormon Church. . ."

You *are* chasing your tail. I can't give you the magic bullet to make you stop doing that. I see it so often. A friend who left Mormonism was once a millionaire with factories throughout the country. When I met him he was running a small video production company in Boise. He came to a seminar I did and committed his life to

Christ. However, when the bishop came to talk to Cal and Joyce [their story is found at <http://www.mazeministry.com/mormonism/testimonies/caljoycerixon.htm>] They were basket cases. Fear gripped them. Now, ten years later, they have great peace, but the moment they attempted to exercise their God-given freedom of choice, the psychological terrorism (blame it on the devil or the Mormon Church—either way) they were petrified.

I have never known anyone to leave, who made a firm connection with Christ like you are doing, who ever regretted leaving. In fact, come to think of it, I have never known anyone who left Mormonism to regret it, even if they never found Christ.

Mormonism is manipulative, coercive, and mind-damaging. It is, as Orson

Pratt said, either true or a cunning calculation conceived to ruin millions. [<http://www.mazeministry.com/mormonism/quotes/pratt.htm>]

So you have two roads to take in your search for the light: continue going to Calvary, which you love; or walk back into the web-infested cave of Mormonism. One direction leads to light and liberty (Gal. 5:1), one leads to bondage.

We are pulling for you up here. Margaretta and I are praying for you. See her testimony at <http://www.mazeministry.com/mormonism/testimonies/greet.htm>

Jim

From Sharon
Hi,

"I just was wondering: Genesis 1:2 says "The earth was without form or void and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters". Doesn't this refute the idea of God creating earth out of nothing? If the waters were already there it seems He created the earth out of what was already present."

I just was wondering: Genesis 1:2 says "The earth was without form or void and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters". Doesn't this refute the idea of God creating earth out of nothing? If the waters were already there it seems He created the earth out of what was already present.

I'm just wondering about things as I read so I thought I'd bother you with it :) I really do appreciate you setting me straight on things.

Thanks for the call yesterday it was of course perfect timing for you to call. It really helped for you to pray with me and it lifted the depressed feeling I was having. We went to the Bible study last night too, and they did something different called a night of worship. and it was just awesome. Between you and *that*, I

feel like I could live through this!

Thanks again.

Sharon

To Sharon

"Doesn't this refute the idea of God creating earth out of nothing?" I don't see that connection at all. Creation was the work of God. He obviously created the earth before He created the plant and animal life on it. Man was created by God and did not become a "living soul" until God made him materially and then breathed into him spiritually—life. We have no reason to believe (other than Joseph's theorizing) that preexistent human spirits were stuffed into material bodies. (And as Brigham later postulated, they had to be "compressed" to fit into baby bodies. He also believed all plant life undergoes the same experience.)

I could sit around, like Joseph Smith did, and come up with complex theories of how things might have been. I could, for example, say that God told me to take as many virgins as I wanted and I would not be sinning. But it is all rambling mumbo jumbo.

You might want to read, if you have not already, my chapter on the way Christians have to make what they say fit in with the biblical revelation: <http://www.mazeministry.com/resources/books/havetext/chap09.htm>

Hang in there. Don't burn your brain out. Reflect on your encounter with God during worship last night. That is how you really sort things out—by worshipping God. Interestingly enough, worship—the center of the Christian life—really *never* happens in Mormon Church services. Singing "Praise to the Man" [The Mormon hymn about Joseph Smith] is nothing like what you experienced last night as you lifted your face toward God and worshipped Him because he is worthy to receive praise.

Also, you can't start reading Genesis with the second verse. "In the beginning" God created the earth out of nothing. After *that*, He "organized" things. Mormonism wants the universe to be eternally

present and uncreated with God waking up in that material realm. You either have to have an eternal material universe that organizes itself through chance mutations, producing not only birds and butterflies, but (in Mormon theology) God Himself, or you have to have an eternally existing God who creates material things.

Jim

From Sharon

Never thought of it like that. Yes it is easier to believe in an eternally existing God who creates. Thanks.

Sharon

From Sharon

Jim,

My son says he's pretty sure the Church isn't true but he's worried that if we're wrong then he won't have done his temple work like we have and he'll end up in a different kingdom than us. [Mormonism teaches that sealing our children to ourselves guarantees they will be in the same heavenly kingdom we are—and Mormonism has *three* kingdoms of heaven.] I don't know what to tell my son.

To Sharon

I *do* have a good explanation!

Think about sealing. It is ridiculous for this reason: Let's say you seal your kids to yourself and one of them turns out to be a *total* disbeliever, murderer, and blasphemer. You and your husband, on the other hand, remain good Mormons and "go to the Celestial Kingdom." Where will your kid be? He sure won't be in the Celestial Kingdom. So what earthly (or, especially, heavenly) good is sealing anyway? It is one of the most lame ideas in Mormonism. (Not to be rude.)

I have the feeling that this is going to be a very important piece of information for you. Sealing is so obviously nonsense, while remaining such a foundational part of Mormonism, it may be what finally makes Humpty Dumpty unfixable.

And the idea that the simple act of being sealed would rescue you from hell certainly is backwards to all Mormon teaching that you get

"I have a question about in Revelation it says that we will be kings and priests. I was wondering why? If there is not eternal progression why would we need to be crowned kings and priests?"

to whatever level of heaven you earn. That's why I say it is one of the most ridiculous things Joseph thought up.

Hang in there. We are praying for you.

Jim

From Sharon

Hi,

This is a prayer request for my son. We just found out he has bilateral pneumonia and sinusitis. He's at home for the night on an IV but will have to be admitted tomorrow if he's not a lot better. Thanks in advance.

Love,

Sharon

I CALLED HER AND PRAYED FOR HER SON

From Sharon

Hi,

Hey thanks for calling last night to pray for my son. He's doing amazingly better. He got his IV out this afternoon and feels lot's better. He even wanted to go to karate this afternoon—what a brat! I love how your so confident in the Lord when you pray you've taught me a lot about trusting in Him and I appreciate you so much. Life is onward and upward because of the Lord.

Love,

Sharon

From Sharon

Jim,

I have a question about in Revelation it says that we will be kings and priests. I

was wondering why? If there is not eternal progression why would we need to be crowned kings and priests? I know it's probably a simple answer but I haven't figured it out.

Thanks,

Sharon

To Sharon

Sharon,

I'm going to give you a long answer because the question is typical of many questions that arise out of a very common mistake among Mormons.

Basically, the problem is to bring to the text of the Bible ideas, concepts, and meanings that are inventions of Mormonism. Then to find a word in the Bible which is similar to the concept and decide the word must represent the Mormon concept.

Let me give you an example. In I Cor. Chapter 15 we find:

40 [There are] also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial [is] one, and the [glory] of the terrestrial [is] another.

41 [There is] one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for [one] star differeth from [another] star in glory."

Now Joseph Smith decided there were different levels of heaven. I think the reason he did so was to manipulate the Saints into greater levels of obedience. He could say to them, "The really, really obedient people go to a better kingdom than the mediocre Mormons. Now, that is certainly contrary to the teaching of the Bible which says there are two choices: heaven and hell.

But, Smith likes the other idea and since he has not scripture for it, he looks for one that has that kind of ring to it. He finds it in I Cor chapter 15. "Aha! he says, "Here is a description of the levels of heaven!" But, of course that passage has nothing at all to do with any levels of heaven. It is saying that the resurrected body is so perfect and beautiful that comparing it to our present body would be like comparing the brightness of the sun to the brightness of the moon. So there are "ter-

restrial bodies” (our present ones) and “celestial bodies” (the ones we will have in the resurrection.

Now, here is where the problem fits in with the “kings and priests.” When a person, who has been repeatedly told that heaven consists of three levels (or five if you count all three levels of the Celestial Kingdom), that person begins to believe that it is true. Then when he hears the words “terrestrial and celestial” he immediately thinks of heavens. But those words *do not* describe heavens.

So, when you hear or read the words “kings and priests,” you say “Eternal Progression.” Well, the idea of eternal progression is not found anywhere in the Bible. If there *were* such a thing as eternal progression, then “kings and priests” might be referring to that. And if there were such things as multiple heavens the words “terrestrial and celestial” might very well be pertaining to them. (Of course all one has to do is read the 15th chapter of I Corinthians to find out what the words *are* referring to).

So, when we encounter words in the Bible we can’t allow ourselves to say “OK, Joseph Smith has defined this for us.” We have to ask what the words might mean, without reference to—in

this case—eternal progression. No evidence of eternal progression in the Bible.

So, what is happening when Revelation uses “kings and priests.” The bad news is we may not know. See, when we find something in the Bible which is not clearly explained, we have to wait for the fuller explanation. We can speculate as to what is meant. But, to be honest, notwithstanding all the spurious doctrines of Mormonism, we really do not know much at all about heaven. We know that it is Good. We know God is there. We know we worship Him there. We also know, to

lesser degree, that there is no marriage in heaven, that we will have a mansion there, that we will know friends and relatives from this earth. We know some things for certain: there is no death or dying, no sickness, no tears in heaven. But beyond those things, we don’t know much.

Kings and priests? Well, we know we are *sons* and priests right now. Being a son (or daughter) is even better than being a king. A priest is simply someone who helps people come to see and know God. So these two reverences in Revelation (a book, by the way, which is *full* of pictures and allusions of which we have no understanding) mean something. One astute commentator on Revelation has said of these passages:

He has *made them kings and priests to God and his Father*. Having justified and sanctified them, he makes them kings to his Father; that is, in his Father’s account, with his approbation, and for his glory. As kings, they govern their own spirits, conquer Satan, have power and prevalency with God in prayer, and shall judge the world. He hath made them priests,

given them access to God, enabled them to enter into the

holiest and to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices, and has given them an unction suitable to this character; and for these high honours and favours they are bound to ascribe to him dominion and glory for ever.

His understanding seems to be that these exalted terms are used to describe the glorious condition in which we—believers—find ourselves in heaven.

The Bible Interpretation principle here is found in two warnings in scripture. Warnings Joseph Smith, had he heeded them, would not have created Mormon-

ism, what the late Dr. Walter Martin called “A confusion of garbled doctrines masquerading as Christianity.”

The other warning is found in II Peter 1:20:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

This means that no scripture can be ripped out of context and said to mean something when the rest of the Bible teaches the opposite. As in I Cor 8:5:

as there be gods many, and lords many Which Mormonism quotes—entirely out of context and backwards to its true meaning—to prove that men may become gods!

I hope you see the principle I am trying to drive home here, Sharon. Mormonism hears the word “priesthood,” and thinks “Mormon Priesthood.” But in the New Testament, the whole idea of Priesthood is that there is *only One Priest* and we have direct access to Him. (Yes, as I said, we are “priests” in a sense, but the idea of an organized priesthood such as is described in the Old Testament is totally done away with in Christ. That ending of the Old Testament Priesthood is documented in the Book of Hebrews in the New Testament.

So, if you want to know what the Bible says, you have to understand that you can’t have Joseph Smith and the fatally flawed doctrines of Mormonism informing the interpretation of the biblical text.

Hope that wasn’t too involved and I hope it helps.

Hang in there...
Jim

From Sharon
Hi,

My mother in law called last night and knowing nothing of us questioning the Church, asked us to come up and go to the temple with them. . .Now my husband is saying I should put on my [temple] garments, get a recommend, and go! . . . I told my husband we would have to lie, but he said “No we wouldn’t” because we haven’t made a final decision [to leave the Church] yet. Is he *desperate*?

Got anything brilliant I can say to him? Let me know.

“My mother in law called last night and knowing nothing of us questioning the Church, ask us to come up and go to the temple with them. . . .Now my husband is saying I should put on my [temple] garments, get a recommend, and go!”

Love,
Sharon

Thanks,
Sharon

To Sharon
Sharon,

I think I told you early on that your husband's *real* fear is his family. No, there is nothing you can say to him to "push him over the edge." I do hope *you*, however, will have the courage to "just say no." Remember Mormonism's Eleventh Article of Faith: *We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.*

I think there is something damaging to our own soul when we start lying to protect ourselves. What does that say about our trust in God. Martin Luther stood before the synod which had the power to take his life and said: "I will not recant, here I stand!" I guess

I am a little bit short tempered on this one because I had to risk losing my wife and child for my stand for Christ. I know that God gave me the power to do it. And remember, your husband will be won, not by your eloquence, but by your determination to live a godly life, which has no room for posturing and lying. It is not as though you are trying to mess with your family.

And guess what? Me being the most skeptical of all people says to myself: "your in-laws know exactly what they are doing." They are trying to manipulate you guys. Let your husband do what he wants, you need to live for the Lord straight up, come what may.

(Wow. That is as strong as I have been with you. Hope it isn't *too* strong.)

Jim

From Sharon

Not too strong. I know I need to take a stand for me and my kids (the kids want to get out.) I guess if he wants to go with his family he can go without me- I'll wait outside. He claims it won't bother him if I get out and he doesn't—I guess we'll see.

From Sharon
Hi,

We are going to get an appointment with the Regional Representative Sunday to see if he will answer my husband and my son's questions on Church doctrine. Is there any special questions I should write down to take with us? Or is there anything I need to take with us to show them.

Love,
Sharon

To Sharon
Sharon,

No, there isn't anything I can think of that you haven't thought of a thousand times. I think you will either come out of the meeting convinced the Church is

"It's funny you should mention that you wished I would just make a decision and let them go to the Regional Representative themselves—I was just sitting here thinking that myself. I have seen enough evidence that it's not true I don't need to listen to them bear their testimonies to me."

wrong, or you will come back out to confusion and vacillation. And you might have to go through that for some more time. I have no fear the guy will say anything that will convince *you* or your son that the Church is true. I feel like your husband, however, is in a different place. I sense he really just wishes the conflict could be over. That Humpty Dumpty could get put back together and you could go on with your lives. In other words, I think the truth of all this is more important to you and your son than to your husband. I know that is a judgment call and something I am really not in a position to know for sure. But it is born out of my experience. *You* are really interested and he sort of *has* to be interested because of that. But if you were not present, he would

probably just go back to sleep and hope all the conflict would go away. He really doesn't *have* to know, he just wishes everybody could get along and be happy.

Forgive me if I am way off base. Just sharing what I sense is going on. You will be in a dither because you can't seem to make a final decision until he does. But it doesn't work that way. You have to make your decision and let the chips fall where they may. That probably is the *only* way your husband will smell the coffee (I know that is bad analogy). I know my wife, Margaretta, would *never, ever* have come out if I diddled along and failed to make a decision. We would still be miserable and we would still be Mormons.

If you could stand up and say, "I'm out! And I'm not going to be browbeat by the regional representative—you guys go by yourself," I think you would be doing everybody a big, big favor. Having said that, I don't think you *can* do that, I'm just wishing.

Jim

From Sharon
Jim,

It's funny you should mention that you wished I would just make a decision and let them go to the regional rep themselves—I was just sitting here thinking that myself. I have seen enough evidence that it's not true I don't need to listen

to them bear their testimonies to me. I think if I say I won't go neither will my son and husband. My son is just waiting for us to make up our minds because he's unsure of It's my husband sitting on the fence because he hasn't bothered to read the same things as I have. So now that you mention it I think he *should* go alone. It's *his* decision I've already made mine. I will tell him tonight when he comes home that I don't want to go and I want to stop going to the I know that the Lord will provide if we just trust in Him. I'm very, very tired and I've had enough of the depression and stress involved with my need to make a decision. Thanks for your thoughts on the situation. I think your right about my husband.

To Sharon

I am *so* happy with that decision. God will give you the ability to stand strong. And that really is what Your husband needs to see.

From Sharon
Jim,

Thanks again. I've been having to work at being I think my husband is starting to get angry seeing me make a decision I think he thought is was a phase or something. He has been talking like he would like to leave the Church too but then when it comes down to it, he balks. He doesn't say much just acts annoyed. He *is* doing devotionals with me though

Thank you thank you for everything.
Love,
Sharon

From Sharon
Does it really matter if our names are taken off? The only reason I think it does is that it seems to hold us back not to cut ties.

To Sharon

1. There is no rush to tell anyone anything.
2. There is no rush to get your names off. Time will come when you will want to do that.
3. No rush to get baptized or join another church.
4. God will lead you.
5. It is enough to reject error and search for genuine biblical revelation. For 2000 years the Body of Christ has been in consistent agreement on the essentials and given liberty to others in the nonessentials. Things I consider essential: How many Gods are there and will you be one; What is the Nature of God; What is the nature of man; What is the way of salvation.

Keep it simple, worship Jesus, and let Him lead.
Jim

From Sharon

That lifts a weight off my shoulders. Thanks I'll let it go for awhile.

To Sharon
Sharon.

I just printed out all of our emails—50 pages!

My newsletter is normally four pages, I'm going to make it twelve, but I'll have to edit, edit, edit to give people even a taste of where we have been together. But it

sure has been interesting. And for me, to see how far you have come is very rewarding. Jim

From Sharon

WOW I've been relentless with you—I can't believe I had so many questions!

That makes me appreciate you even more. And here I am still sending you questions. Good grief! You sure have been a big help and I feel like I can trust you and the answers you give me. I've been so afraid of making the wrong decision and you've really helped me get over that.

To Sharon
Sharon,

My pleasure! It's what I live for.
Jim

"Thanks for everything. I will keep moving ahead and when my husband is ready he'll come along. I can't go back."

**Through the
Maze Ministry is
totally supported
by love gifts from
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We must hear
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We are more
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Be sure to visit our web sites:

BeyondMormonism.com

MazeMinistry.com

HolyMurder.com

YRULDS.com

When you first started talking about this book project, I thought you were getting distracted from your ministry to folks in the main group in SLC. I can see you feel very strongly about the polygamous element and the greater damage they're doing in areas mentioned? Good Job!

—Tom McGovern

I opened your book last night and found it to be excellent reading. I love your style, man, but the substance is the payoff. Thank you for writing it.

—Pastor Micah Smith

Your new book is excellent. I read it in two days. W.E.B. Griffin is the only author that I have just read and read and read, until *Holy Murder: Polygamy's Blood* came along. Your newest book has the very latest of everything that is happening in the world today. The Twin Towers, cutting-edge technology. . .weaponry. . . your ducks are very much in a row. Well done, excellent, factual, to-the-point—a book you don't want to put down. . . I could go and on.

Semper Fi

—Eddy Shell

I seldom read novels but your book *Holy Murder: Polygamy's Blood* kept me “glued” to the book until finished.

—Tom Smith

I was *very* impressed with this book. I am no critic so I can offer no flowery review, but I can say that it was very difficult to stop reading. I kept telling myself, one more chapter.... thank you for having the courage to write this book, it amazes me that this kind of stuff continues to exist in our country in this century. It angers and saddens me at the same time.

—Elizabeth Trongale

I just wanted to say thanks for writing *Holy Murder: Polygamy's Blood!*

The novel puts the subject in easy reach of the reader and is very exciting and entertaining. It is a real page turner too!

I especially enjoyed the scenery of Wyoming, it was like going home.

—Ron Reed, Lifetime Radio

Thank you so much for your newest book, *Holy Murder*. I read it this past weekend and I could hardly put it down! The description of Wyoming's Big Horn Mountains and attending rivers and countryside is enough to make me want to go there. I just hope that the Hansen compound is not really there!

—Muriel Sower

We're loving your book! I read to Blaine as we drive back and forth from our cabin in the mountains. The 4-5 hour drive flies by...It's powerful stuff.

—Blaine and Randi Hunsaker

My friend, Randi Hunsaker sent me your new book, *Holy Mur-*

der: Polygamy's Blood. I have other books of your also: *Beyond Mormonism: An Elder's Story* and *Mormonism's Temple of Doom*. I have always enjoyed your style of writing—easy reading and to the point. Your latest has proven to be a delight. I read it in a day and passed it on to my daughter. It left me wanting to read more. We no longer live in Utah, and we miss the challenge we always had there to defend our faith. May God Bless you always.

—Alice Taylor

