

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries



Steve Clifford

<mailto:stevec@transporter.com>

<http://www.transporter.com>

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

1

The Missionary Discussions



1. *The Plan of Our Heavenly Father*

2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ
3. The Restoration
4. Eternal Progression
5. Living a Christ-like Life
6. Membership in the Kingdom

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

2

The Missionary Discussions



1. The Plan of Our Heavenly Father

- God has a plan for our salvation
- We are to become like him
- By faith and by following the perfect example of Jesus we can return to God and live forever
- Through prophets we find out about this divine plan
- Prophets continue to teach even today

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

3

The Missionary Discussions



1. The Plan of Our Heavenly Father (Cont.)

- Joseph Smith is one such prophet; indeed, he is the greatest
- He had a vision as a young boy and was used by God to bring back the true Christian church.
- He did this, in part, by discovering and translating the Book of Mormon, an ancient record of Hebrew people living in America

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

4

The Missionary Discussions



1. The Plan of Our Heavenly Father (Cont.)

- You can know that what the missionaries say is true by listening to their “testimonies” and praying to receive one of your own

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

5

The Catholic Response



- Topics for Discussion
 - Plan of Salvation
 - God
 - Jesus Christ
 - The Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit)
 - Prophets
 - First Vision
 - Book of Mormon
 - Prayer
 - Testimony

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

6

LDS Plan of Salvation



- Everything is matter (even spirits)
- All matter is eternal, unmade, and indestructible
- The god of this world (Elohim) was once a man in another world
- Elohim and his celestial wives procreated billions of “spirit children”
- The first of these “spirit children” was “Jehovah”
- Lucifer was his younger spirit brother

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

7

LDS Plan of Salvation (Cont.)



- Council of the gods was called to determine the plan
- Christ and Lucifer responded with plans
 - Christ proposed free agency (free will to accept him and his plan)
 - Lucifer offered to save all people by depriving them of free will (no free will – no sin)
- The gods chose Christ’s plan
- Enraged, Lucifer rebelled and was joined by 1/3 of the spirit children (battle in heaven)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

8

LDS Plan of Salvation (Cont.)

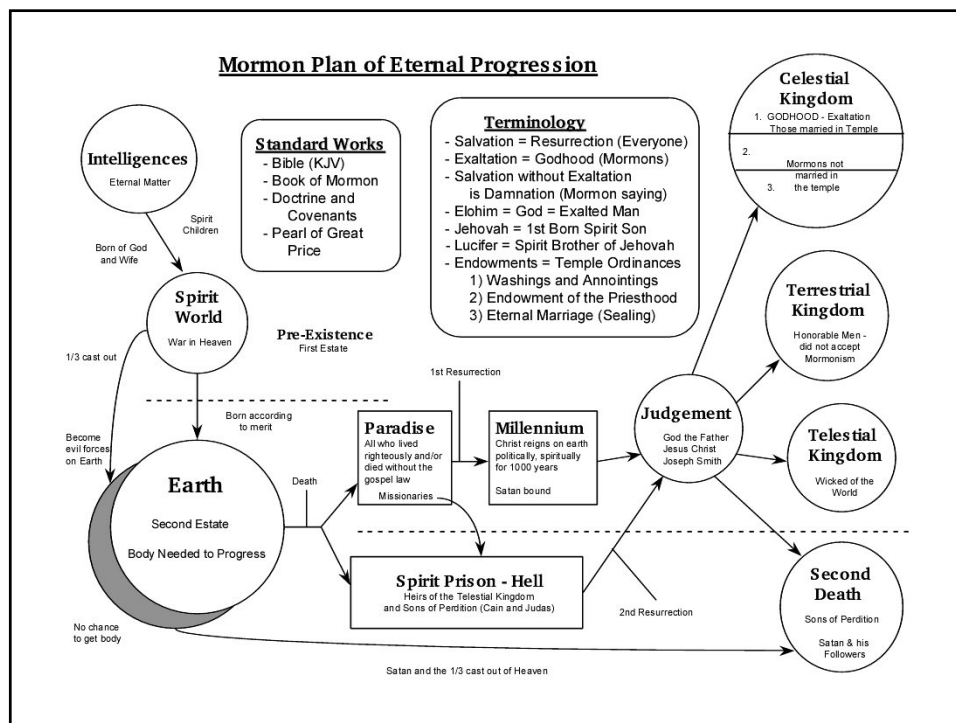


- Many fought valiantly for Christ – rewarded by being born into happy, prosperous families
- Less noble parentage for those who were least valiant or even neutral
- During earthly life, each person has the chance to accept or reject Mormon “gospel”
- At death, each human spirit enters the “spirit world”
- Most humans will eventually enjoy some type of heavenly bliss

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

9



Catholic Plan of Salvation



- Where did we come from?
 - “The world was made for the glory of God.... The ultimate purpose of creation is that God who is the Creator of all things may at last become ‘all in all.’ ” God wanted to make His creatures share in His being, wisdom and goodness. (CCC 293-295)
 - God created heaven and earth from nothing, by His word only; that is, by a single act of His all-powerful will. (Baltimore Catechism, Question 33)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

11

Catholic Plan of Salvation (Cont.)



- Why are we here?
 - “God enables men to be intelligent and free causes in order to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony for their own good and that of their neighbors.” We enter into the divine plan by our actions, prayers and sufferings. (CCC 307)
 - We were made “to know, love, and serve God in this life, and be happy with him in the next.” (Baltimore Catechism, Questions 3, 4, and 6)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

12

Catholic Plan of Salvation (Cont.)



- Where are we going?
 - “Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ.... Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.... In the glory of heaven the blessed continue joyfully to fulfill God’s will in relation to other men and to all creation. Already they reign with Christ; with him ‘they shall reign for ever and ever’ “. (CCC 1023, 1024, 1029)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

13

Catholic Plan of Salvation (Cont.)



- The Four Last Things
 - **Death** (end of our earthly life)
 - **Judgment** (by Christ)
 - Particular Judgment (each individual at the moment of death)
 - General Judgment (all men on the last day)
 - **Heaven** (Beatific Vision)
 - Directly if in a state of perfect holiness (without sin or reparation due to sin)
 - Purgatory for those who die without perfect holiness (with venial sins or reparation due to sin)
 - **Hell**
 - Eternal state to which the wicked are condemned (without God)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

14

LDS God (Heavenly Father)



- God is a (glorified, exalted) personage in form like us
- God has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as ours
- God was once a mortal man on another world
- God has a father, who has a father, and so on
- There are gods without number (polytheism)
- Adam is God (taught by Brigham Young)
- God is the physical father of Jesus Christ

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

15

The Christian God



- There is only one God
 - Deut. 4:35, 6:4, 32:39; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1Kgs. 8:60; Ps. 86:10; Is. 43:10-11, 44:6, 8; Hos. 13:4; John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 1:17, 2:5; James 2:19; Jude 25
- Blessed Trinity - One God in three Persons
 - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - God the Father is the first person of the Blessed Trinity
- God is Spirit
 - CCC 370; Num. 3:19; Hos. 11:9; Col. 1:15-16; 1 Tim. 1:17

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

16

LDS Jesus Christ



- Jesus Christ is a subordinate, lesser god than the Father (the Holy Ghost is lower still)
- Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of the Father (in the flesh)
- God the Father (an immortal Personage) begot Jesus in the flesh through copulation with the Virgin Mary
- There are limitations on Christ's atonement
- Jesus Christ fathered children with his plural wives

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

17

The Real Jesus Christ



- Jesus Christ is True God and True Man - the second person of the Blessed Trinity
- Jesus is the eternal Son of God
 - He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered crucifixion and death, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
- Jesus accomplished perfectly the divine mission of priest, prophet, and King
 - Signified by his anointing as Messiah (Christ)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

18

LDS Holy Ghost



- Spirit in the form of a man with size and dimensions – no physical body
- Third god subordinate to the Father and Jesus
- Created, as was Jesus, at some point in the distant past
- Like the other gods, the Holy Ghost is limited and changeable
- He cannot be all-present, since his “spirit body” allows him to be in only one place at one time

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

19

LDS Holy Ghost (Cont.)



- Through the Holy Ghost we can know the truth about spiritual things (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; James 1:5-6)
- Read the Book of Mormon (Moroni 10:3-5).
- If you will read, ponder, and pray sincerely about the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost will manifest to you that it is true
- Appealing to the Holy Ghost trumps science, reason, and facts
- Holy Ghost gets the credit for ongoing revelation

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

20

Christian Holy Spirit



- Third Person of the Blessed Trinity
- Consubstantial with the Father and the Son, He is worshiped and glorified
- Also called the Paraclete (Advocate) and Spirit of Truth
- The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the divine plan for our salvation
- No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

21

Gifts of the Holy Spirit



- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- Fear of the Lord

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

22

Fruits of the Holy Spirit



- Charity
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Generosity
- Gentleness
- Faithfulness
- Modesty
- Self-control
- Chastity

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

23

LDS Prophets



- The Mormon church calls its leadership “prophets” and “apostles”
- Christ’s church must be led by prophets (Amos 3:7) and apostles (Eph. 2:19-20)
- President Gordon B. Hinkley (94) is the current “prophet, seer, and revelator”
- Apostles are also “prophets, seers, and revelators”
- In addition to written scripture we need continuous revelation from living prophets to guide us

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

24

Christian View of Prophets



- The age for new, publicly binding revelation is over (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- Christ is the fulfillment of the Scriptures (Luke 24:44)
- John the Baptist is the last (and greatest) of the prophets (Luke 1:76, 7:26-28; Matthew 11:9-13)
- Scripture warns that there will always be false prophets presuming to speak for God (Deuteronomy 18:20, 22; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

25

Joseph Smith's First Vision (Official Version - 1838)



- 1820 religious revival, Joseph Smith (14) prayed to know which church to join (James 1:5)
- God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him
- Jesus answered (as per Joseph Smith): "join none of them, for they were all wrong... all their creeds were an abomination in his sight..."
- Jesus said to Smith, "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men"

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

26

Joseph Smith's First Vision (Unofficial Versions)



- 1832 Smith proclaimed that the Lord (Jesus Christ) had appeared to him – no mention of the Father
- 1835 he wrote that two unnamed persons had appeared to him in the midst of flame, together with many angels – no mention of God
- 1835 Smith gave for publication the story that the religious revival was in 1823 and that he was visited by an angel in his bedroom – no mention of the Father and the Son

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

27

The Book of Mormon



- Primarily a record of two great civilizations
 - Jaredites
 - Descendants of Jared who came to South and Central America by eight boats when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel (about 2200 B.C. until 200 B.C.)
 - Nephites and Lamanites
 - Descendants of the sons of Lehi, who came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C. The Nephites were righteous people (white and delightsome) and the Lamanites were wicked, filthy, and ignorant (cursed w/dark skin)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

28

The Book of Mormon (Cont.)



- The golden plates (records) were sealed and hidden in the ground in the Hill Cumorah about 421 A.D. by Moroni, son of Mormon and the last of the Nephite prophet-historians
- 1823 - Joseph Smith learns of the golden plates during a visitation by the angel Moroni (Nephi by some accounts)
- 1827 – Guided by the angel Moroni, Smith unearths the golden plates and begins translation
- 1830 – The Book of Mormon is first published

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

29

Problems with the Book of Mormon



- There is absolutely no evidence of any of the societies mentioned in the book
 - No evidence of “Reformed Egyptian”
 - No archeological finds to support any of the stories (great battles using swords, shields, armor, etc.)
 - No evidence of things like iron, elephants, domesticated animals, bees, etc.
 - No coins as described in Alma 11:5-19 have been found

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

30

Problems with the Book of Mormon (Cont.)



- The Book of Mormon contains nothing unique to Mormonism
- The “Fullness of Gospel” has had over 4,000 changes made to it
- Supplemented/augmented by Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and modern-day writings by church officials and revelations by their prophets
- It is called “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:8)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

31

LDS Prayer



- Avoid almost any kind of printed, formal, or memorized prayer (except prayers over the sacrament and ritualistic words of the temple ceremonies)
- “Moved by the Holy Ghost”
- Four steps of prayer:
 - “Our Father in heaven...”
 - “We thank thee...”
 - “We Ask thee...”
 - “In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

32

LDS Prayer Structure



- Fold your arms, bow your head, and close your eyes
- Always begin by addressing the Heavenly Father (forbidden to pray to Christ or the Holy Spirit)
- Always use the expressions “thee”, “thy”, “thou”, etc. in addressing God
- Continue your prayer by thanking God for whatever gifts you have experienced
- Then make your petitions known
- Finally, conclude in the name of Jesus Christ

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

33

Problems with LDS Prayer



- Missing is any direct praise or adoration of the Lord
- Rarely hear public prayer extolling God’s goodness and glory
- Lacking any elements of contrition or sorrow for sin

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

34

Christian Prayer



- Catholics pray as the Lord taught
 - The “Lord’s Prayer” summarizes the Christian’s attitude toward prayer
 - The “Our Father” teaches us to adore God publicly and explicitly
 - We are to ask for help in doing His will
 - We petition Him for forgiveness
- The “Hail Mary” is another biblical prayer
- Through prayer the Christian experiences a communion with God through Christ in the Church

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

35

LDS Testimony



- Testimonies of divine truths come through personal revelation
- To be capable of entering into celestial glory, each person must eventually gain an independent, personal testimony (of the truth of the Mormon gospel and its doctrines)
- We can gain testimonies through obedience to God
- We are to pray for a testimony of the Mormon gospel

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

36

Problems with LDS Testimonies



- Personal revelation based on subjective feelings and emotions
- No testimony means no exaltation
- Every member is expected to bear his testimony of the “restored church” (mutual encouragement and promotion)
- Challenging God to “show me” the truth by giving a “burning in the bosom”
- Personal testimony (inspired by the Holy Ghost) trumps science, reason, and facts

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

37

Christian Testimony



- Christ said the “truth” will set us free (John 8:32)
- Christ did not tell us to “feel” our way into his Church
- Jesus Christ is the “truth” (John 14:6)
- We are to seek Him (Matthew 7:7)
- Study, search his word in Scripture and the Church’s teaching authority (Acts 17:10-11)
- Listen to His chosen leaders for that is the same as listening to Him (Luke 10:16)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

38

Summary



- There is only ONE God (3 persons - 1 nature)
 - Book of Mormon agrees
- Who do you say Jesus is? (Matthew 16:13-19)
- “I am amazed that you are so quickly forsaking the one who called you by [the] grace [of Christ] for a different gospel (not that there is another).” (Galatians 1:6)
- “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach [to you] a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed!” (Galatians 1:8)

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

39

Summary (Cont.)



- Know, love, and practice your own faith
- Use good Catholic Christian charity when speaking to the Mormon missionaries
- Be prepared to respond with your own “testimony” of the fullness of truth contained only in the Catholic Church
- No “Total Apostasy” means no need for Restoration

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

40

Question and Answer



Steve Clifford

<mailto:stevec@transporter.com>

<http://www.transporter.com>

March 24, 2006

Catholic Response to the LDS Missionaries

41