

A Biblical Refutation of LDS Doctrines on Divine Nature and Human Destiny

Introduction

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints presents distinctive theological positions that fundamentally diverge from orthodox Christian doctrine, particularly regarding the nature of God, humanity's relationship to divinity, and eschatological destiny. Their official essay "[Becoming Like God](#)" articulates several core beliefs that warrant careful theological examination through the lens of biblical revelation and historical Christian orthodoxy. This comprehensive analysis will demonstrate how these LDS doctrines contradict essential Christian truths established through Scripture and affirmed by the historic church.

The stakes of this theological discussion extend far beyond academic debate. At issue are fundamental questions about the nature of God, the condition of humanity, the means of salvation, and the ultimate destiny of human souls. **The LDS positions examined here represent not merely alternative interpretations of Christian doctrine, but constitute a departure from biblical Christianity so significant as to alter the gospel itself.**

The False Doctrine of Universal Divine Sonship

The LDS Position Examined

The LDS essay "[Becoming Like God](#)" boldly asserts that *"Latter-day Saints see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential."* This teaching presents a fundamental misunderstanding of biblical anthropology and soteriology, conflating the universal human bearing of God's image with the particular spiritual relationship that defines genuine divine sonship.

This doctrine suggests that all humanity possesses an inherent divine nature simply by virtue of biological birth, making divine sonship a matter of ontological reality rather than spiritual transformation. Such a view necessarily undermines the biblical teaching that becoming a child of God requires faith, repentance, and spiritual rebirth through Jesus Christ.

Contemporary evangelical theologians have consistently critiqued this fundamental error in LDS anthropology. The distinction between being created in God's image and possessing divine sonship represents a crucial theological boundary that Mormon doctrine systematically blurs. As noted by evangelical scholars examining LDS theology, Christians don't believe that we're all children of God in the soteriological sense that Mormons assert. This reflects the broader evangelical consensus that divine sonship must be distinguished from universal human dignity as image-bearers.

Francis J. Beckwith, in his [critical analysis of Mormon theism](#), has noted how LDS doctrine fundamentally alters traditional Christian categories by conflating ontological and relational aspects of divine-human relationships. Modern Reformed theologians consistently maintain that the biblical

distinction between creation in God's image (which all humans share) and adoption as God's children (which only believers possess) is essential to preserving the gospel's clarity and the uniqueness of Christian conversion.

Biblical Evidence Against Universal Divine Sonship

The Scriptures provide clear and consistent testimony against the notion that all people are automatically children of God in any salvific sense. The apostle John draws a sharp distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil: ***"By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother"*** (1 John 3:10 ESV).

This verse establishes behavioral and spiritual criteria for divine sonship that naturally exclude those who persist in unrighteousness. The text does not suggest that the ***"children of the devil"*** are somehow also children of God in a different sense, but rather presents these as mutually exclusive categories based on spiritual reality rather than biological origin.

Similarly, John's Gospel emphasizes that divine sonship is a privilege granted through faith rather than a universal inheritance: ***"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"*** (John 1:12 ESV). The phrase ***"gave the right to become"*** clearly indicates that divine sonship is not humanity's natural state but requires a divine act of grace in response to faith. If all people were already children of God ***"in a full and complete sense,"*** this transformation would be unnecessary and meaningless.

Paul's teaching in Romans further clarifies this distinction: ***"This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring"*** (Romans 9:8 ESV). Here, the apostle explicitly rejects any notion that biological descent or natural birth establishes divine sonship. Instead, he grounds this relationship in God's sovereign promise and gracious election.

The same apostle reinforces this teaching elsewhere: ***"Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning"*** (1 John 3:7-8 ESV). Again, we see the clear division between those who belong to God and those who belong to the devil, based not on universal divine nature but on moral and spiritual alignment.

Paul's letter to the Romans provides additional clarity: ***"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him"*** (Romans 8:9 ESV). This passage establishes the indwelling Holy Spirit as the distinguishing mark of those who belong to Christ, implying that those without this Spirit do not possess such a relationship.

The Galatian epistle reinforces the conditional nature of divine sonship: ***"for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith"*** (Galatians 3:26 ESV). The prepositional phrase ***"through faith"*** indicates the means by which divine sonship is obtained, contradicting any notion that it is universal or automatic.

Perhaps most significantly, Jesus himself addressed this issue directly when confronting religious leaders: ***"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him"*** (John 8:44 ESV). These words, spoken to religious individuals who claimed Abraham as their father and presumably considered themselves children of God, demolish any theory of universal divine sonship.

Historical Christian Understanding

The historic Christian church has consistently understood divine sonship as a privilege granted through grace rather than a universal human condition. Augustine, the great theologian of the early church, clearly articulated this distinction: ***"We were not born of God in the manner in which the Only-begotten was born of Him, but were adopted by His grace."***

This Augustinian formulation captures the biblical distinction between Christ's natural sonship and the believer's adopted sonship. While Christ is the eternal Son by nature, believers become children of God through divine adoption—a legal and spiritual act that transforms their relationship to the Father. This adoption requires faith, repentance, and spiritual regeneration, making it fundamentally different from natural birth.

The Protestant Reformers maintained this understanding, emphasizing that divine sonship results from justification by faith alone rather than inherent human nature. The Westminster Confession of Faith expresses this clearly: ***"All those that are justified God vouchsafes, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God."***

The Soteriological Implications

The LDS doctrine of universal divine sonship fundamentally alters the gospel message by suggesting that all people already possess what the Bible presents as the goal of redemption. If every person is already a child of God ***"in a full and complete sense,"*** then the gospel's call to ***"become"*** children of God becomes superfluous. This effectively eliminates the necessity of the new birth that Jesus declared essential for entering the kingdom of God (John 3:3).

Furthermore, this teaching obscures the radical nature of the transformation that occurs in genuine conversion. The Bible presents salvation not as the recognition of existing divine sonship but as a fundamental change from spiritual death to spiritual life, from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. The LDS position minimizes this transformation by suggesting it merely actualizes what was already true rather than creating something genuinely new.

The Heretical Teaching of Human Deification

The LDS Doctrine Examined

Among the most distinctive and problematic LDS teachings is the doctrine of human deification, summarized in Lorenzo Snow's famous couplet: ***"As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man***

may be." This doctrine, reinforced by Joseph Smith's teaching that believers *"have got to learn how to be a god yourself,"* represents a fundamental departure from biblical monotheism and the Creator-creature distinction.

The LDS essay "[Becoming Like God](#)" attempts to present this doctrine as merely an extension of the biblical teaching about being *"partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Peter 1:4), but this interpretation grossly distorts the biblical text's meaning. The doctrine goes far beyond moral transformation or spiritual participation in God's life to assert actual ontological transformation into deity.

Spencer W. Kimball's elaboration of this doctrine makes its radical nature unmistakable: *"Each one of you has it within the realm of his possibility to develop a kingdom over which you will preside as its king and god. You will need to develop yourself and grow in ability and power and worthiness, to govern such a world with all of its people."* This teaching explicitly promises believers that they will become gods ruling over their own worlds and peoples.

The founder of the Latter-day Saint movement, Joseph Smith, Jr., explicitly taught this doctrine. In his 1844 "King Follett discourse," he stated, *"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!"* He continued by saying, *"...you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves... the same as all gods have done".*

More recent and modern leaders of the LDS Church have continued to affirm the doctrine, though the phrasing has often shifted to emphasize that believers can become *like* God, rather than explicitly becoming a *"god"* themselves. However, official publications and scripts still affirm the core concept of exaltation, with faithful believers inheriting *"all that the Father has"*. An official Church website states that through following Christ's teachings, all people can become *"partakers of the divine nature"*.

The Biblical Testimony Against Human Deification

The Scriptures present an uncompromising monotheistic worldview that categorically rejects any possibility of human beings becoming gods. The Lord's declaration through Isaiah leaves no ambiguity: *"Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be after me"* (Isaiah 43:10 ESV). This verse establishes both the eternality of God's existence and the impossibility of any being becoming god after Him.

The broader context of Isaiah 43 reinforces this truth as God declares His absolute uniqueness: *"I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior"* (Isaiah 43:11 ESV). The repetition of the first-person pronoun emphasizes God's exclusive claim to deity, while the phrase *"besides me there is no savior"* extends this exclusivity to the soteriological realm.

Deuteronomy provides equally clear testimony: *"To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him"* (Deuteronomy 4:35 ESV). This verse was specifically given to help Israel understand God's absolute uniqueness in deity. The phrase *"there is no other besides him"* admits no exceptions and allows no room for created beings to ascend to godhood.

Additional Old Testament passages reinforce this theme. God declares through Isaiah: *"I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god"* (Isaiah 44:6 ESV). The temporal language *"first"* and

"last" encompasses all of time and eternity, leaving no space for other beings to become gods either before or after the true God.

The New Testament maintains this strict monotheism while revealing the Trinitarian nature of the one God. Paul affirms: **"There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist"** (1 Corinthians 8:6 ESV). This verse affirms both the oneness of God and the eternality of Christ's lordship while maintaining the Creator-creature distinction.

The Ontological Impossibility of Deification

The biblical worldview establishes an absolute ontological distinction between Creator and creation that cannot be bridged by any creature, regardless of moral development or spiritual progress. This distinction is not merely one of degree but of kind—God is uncreated, eternal, and self-existent, while all other beings are created, temporal, and dependent.

The doctrine of creation ex nihilo, clearly taught in Scripture, establishes that everything other than God came into existence through God's creative act. **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"** (Genesis 1:1 ESV). This creative act establishes an unbridgeable ontological gulf between the Creator and everything He has made.

Furthermore, the attributes that define deity—such as self-existence, eternality, omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability—cannot be acquired or developed. These are not enhanced versions of creaturely attributes but qualitatively different characteristics that belong to God's essential nature. A being that developed these attributes would not truly possess them, since true self-existence cannot be derived, and genuine eternality cannot have a beginning.

The Christological Confusion

The LDS doctrine of human deification creates significant christological problems by suggesting that Jesus Christ's divinity is merely an example of what all faithful humans can achieve. This reduces the Incarnation from a unique hypostatic union of divine and human natures to simply one instance of a repeatable process of human deification.

Scripture presents Christ's divine sonship as fundamentally different from the adopted sonship available to believers. Jesus is **"the only begotten Son"** (John 3:16 KJV), a title that emphasizes His unique relationship to the Father. The Greek term **"monogenes"** indicates not only uniqueness but also the idea of being **"one of a kind"** or **"in a class by himself."**

Moreover, Christ's pre-existence as the eternal Word (John 1:1) distinguishes His divine nature from any possibility of acquired deity. He did not become God through moral development or spiritual progress, but **"was God"** from eternity past. This eternal deity is precisely what enables Him to serve as the perfect mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

Historical Christian Response to Deification Errors

The early Christian church confronted similar errors in the form of Gnosticism and various forms of mysticism that promised human participation in divinity. The church consistently rejected any teaching that blurred the Creator-creature distinction or promised ontological transformation into deity.

The Nicene Creed's affirmation that Christ is *"true God and true man"* was formulated partly to maintain the uniqueness of the Incarnation against various errors that would make it merely an example of human deification. The Council of Chalcedon further clarified that Christ's divine and human natures remain distinct even in their union, preventing any notion that humanity can be absorbed into divinity.

Medieval mysticism occasionally flirted with deification themes, but orthodox theologians like Thomas Aquinas carefully distinguished between participation in God's life through grace and any kind of ontological transformation into deity. Aquinas taught that the highest created good—the beatific vision—involves seeing God as He truly is but does not involve becoming God.

The Gnostic Error of Divine Seeds

The LDS Teaching on Seeds of Divinity

The LDS assertion that *"all human beings are children of loving heavenly parents and possess seeds of divinity within them"* represents a contemporary manifestation of ancient Gnostic errors that plagued the early church. This doctrine suggests that human beings possess an inherent divine essence that merely requires development or awakening rather than the radical transformation described in Scripture.

This *"seeds of divinity"* concept necessarily implies that the essential problem of humanity is ignorance or underdevelopment rather than sin and spiritual death. According to this view, salvation becomes a matter of education, spiritual development, or the activation of latent divine potential rather than the forgiveness of sins and spiritual regeneration.

Biblical Anthropology and Human Nature

The biblical understanding of human nature provides a fundamentally different perspective on humanity's condition and potential. While Scripture affirms that humans are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27), it clearly distinguishes this from possessing divine nature or divine seeds.

The image of God (*imago Dei*) refers to humanity's unique capacity for rational thought, moral responsibility, spiritual fellowship with God, and dominion over creation. However, this image does not constitute divinity but rather represents the particular way in which humans reflect their Creator while remaining fundamentally different from Him in nature and being.

The fall described in Genesis 3 resulted in the corruption of this divine image without eliminating it entirely. Humans retain their status as image-bearers, which provides the foundation for human dignity and moral responsibility, but they do not possess *"seeds of divinity"* that merely require cultivation.

GotQuestions.org: [What does it mean that humanity is made in the image of God \(imago dei\)?](#)

Having the **“image”** or **“likeness”** of God means, in the simplest terms, that we were made to resemble God. Adam did not resemble God in the sense of God’s having flesh and blood. Scripture says that **“God is spirit”** (John 4:24) and therefore exists without a body. However, Adam’s body did mirror the life of God insofar as it was created in perfect health and was not subject to death.

The image of God (Latin, *imago dei*) refers to the immaterial part of humanity. It sets human beings apart from the animal world, fits them for the dominion God intended them to have over the earth (Genesis 1:28), and enables them to commune with their Maker. It is a likeness mentally, morally, and socially.

Part of being made in God’s image is that Adam had the capacity to make free choices. Although they were given a righteous nature, Adam and Eve made an evil choice to rebel against their Creator. In so doing, they marred the image of God within themselves, and passed that damaged likeness on to all their descendants (Romans 5:12[mfn]Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—[/mfn]). Today, we still bear the image of God (James 3:9[mfn]With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.[/mfn]), but we also bear the scars of sin. Mentally, morally, socially, and physically, we show the effects of sin.

The good news is that when God redeems an individual, He begins to restore the original image of God, creating a **“new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”** (Ephesians 4:24). That redemption is only available by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior from the sin that separates us from God (Ephesians 2:8-9[mfn]For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.[/mfn]). Through Christ, we are made new creations in the likeness of God (2 Corinthians 5:17[mfn]Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.[/mfn]).

The Biblical Testimony Against Inherent Divine Seeds

Scripture presents a sobering assessment of human nature that contradicts any notion of inherent divine seeds. David’s confession in Psalm 51 reveals the depth of human corruption: ***“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me”*** (Psalm 51:5 ESV). This verse indicates that sin affects human nature from the very beginning of life, making it impossible for humans to possess uncorrupted divine seeds.

Paul’s description of humanity’s natural condition reinforces this biblical anthropology: ***“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind”*** (Ephesians 2:1-3 ESV).

This passage describes unregenerate humanity as ***“dead”*** in sin, following Satan (***“the prince of the power of the air”***), and being ***“by nature children of wrath.”*** Such descriptions are incompatible with

the possession of divine seeds that merely require development. Instead, they indicate that human nature is fundamentally corrupted and requires supernatural intervention for transformation.

Genesis provides additional insight into humanity's post-fall condition: *"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Genesis 6:5 ESV). The comprehensive nature of this corruption—affecting *"every intention"* and being *"only evil continually"*—leaves no room for uncorrupted divine seeds within human nature.

Paul's letter to the Romans further develops this theme: *"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out"* (Romans 7:18 ESV). Even the regenerate Paul acknowledges that *"nothing good dwells"* in his flesh, contradicting any notion that human nature contains inherent divine seeds.

The Gnostic Parallel

The LDS teaching about seeds of divinity bears striking similarities to ancient Gnostic doctrines that the early church identified as heretical. Gnosticism taught that humans possess a divine spark trapped within material bodies, and that salvation consists of awakening this spark through special knowledge (gnosis) rather than through faith in Christ's atoning work.

Like the LDS doctrine, Gnosticism minimized the problem of sin by suggesting that humanity's fundamental issue was ignorance rather than moral corruption. This led to a view of salvation as enlightenment or development rather than forgiveness and regeneration.

The apostle John's first epistle appears to address early forms of Gnostic teaching: *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (1 John 1:8 ESV). This warning directly contradicts any teaching that suggests human nature contains uncorrupted divine elements that merely require development.

Similarly, John's emphasis on the necessity of Christ's atoning sacrifice counters any teaching that makes salvation a matter of developing inherent divinity: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9 ESV). The need for forgiveness and cleansing presupposes genuine moral corruption rather than merely undeveloped divine potential.

The Soteriological Implications

The doctrine of divine seeds fundamentally alters the gospel message by changing the problem that salvation addresses. Instead of presenting humans as sinners in need of forgiveness, this teaching suggests that humans are divine beings in need of development. This shift necessarily changes salvation from a divine rescue operation to a self-improvement project.

Furthermore, this doctrine undermines the necessity of Christ's atoning sacrifice by suggesting that humanity's problem can be solved through spiritual development rather than the payment of sin's penalty. If humans possess divine seeds that merely require cultivation, then Christ's death becomes optional or merely helpful rather than absolutely necessary.

The biblical gospel, by contrast, presents salvation as God's gracious response to humanity's desperate spiritual condition. Humans are not divine beings who have forgotten their true nature but rebels who have violated God's law and deserve His judgment. Salvation comes not through developing divine potential but through faith in Christ's substitutionary atonement and the supernatural gift of spiritual regeneration.

An outline confirming the biblical basis for the statement can be constructed by examining the Bible's teachings on humanity's sinful nature, God's gracious response, Christ's atoning sacrifice, and the supernatural act of regeneration.

I. Humanity's desperate spiritual condition as rebellious sinners

- The Bible describes humanity as corrupted by sin from the beginning due to Adam's disobedience, resulting in separation from God. Romans 5:12 states that sin and death entered the world through one man and spread to all.
- Scripture emphasizes that all people have sinned and are inherently rebellious and spiritually dead without divine intervention, rather than just mistaken. Romans 3:23 says all have sinned, and Ephesians 2:1 notes that people were dead in trespasses and sins. Romans 8:7–8 adds that the mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God and cannot submit to His law.
- Human nature is described as deceitful and wicked, unable to fix its own moral condition. Jeremiah 17:9 asks, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"
- Because of rebellion against God, humanity faces divine judgment. The consequence of sin is death, a result of violating God's standards. Romans 6:23 states that the wages of sin is death, but eternal life is a gift in Christ.

II. Salvation as God's gracious response

- Salvation is presented as a free gift of God's grace and mercy, not earned through self-improvement or works. Ephesians 2:8–9 explains that salvation is by grace through faith, a gift not based on works. Titus 3:5 emphasizes being saved by His mercy, not by righteous deeds.
- God's plan is a rescue from the wrath deserved as sinners, reconciling us to Himself through Christ while we were His enemies. Romans 5:8 highlights God's love in sending Christ while we were sinners, and Romans 5:10 speaks of being reconciled through His death when we were enemies.

III. Faith in Christ's substitutionary atonement

- Jesus, being sinless, took humanity's place and bore the punishment for rebellion. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says God made Christ to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.
- Christ's sacrifice on the cross fully paid for sins, satisfying God's justice. Isaiah 53:5–6 describes Christ being pierced for our transgressions and the Lord laying our iniquity on Him. Hebrews 9:26 mentions Christ appearing to do away with sin by His sacrifice.

- The benefits of Christ's sacrifice are received through faith, not works. John 3:16 states that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life, and Romans 10:9 says that declaring Jesus as Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him will bring salvation.

IV. Spiritual regeneration as a supernatural gift

- The Bible teaches that being "born again" by the Spirit is necessary to enter God's kingdom. This is a miraculous work of God to impart new life. John 3:3 emphasizes the need to be born again to see the kingdom of God.
- This supernatural renewal involves a divine transformation, replacing a "heart of stone" with a "heart of flesh" and changing desires. Ezekiel 36:26 promises a new heart and spirit.
- While works don't cause salvation, they are the result and proof of this supernatural change, producing a new creation with a desire to please God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 states that in Christ, the new creation has come. Ephesians 2:10 says we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

The Progressive Nature of Mormon Cosmology

The LDS Worldview of Divine Progression

The Mormon cosmological system presents a universe populated by beings in various stages of progression from humanity to godhood, with God Himself being merely an exalted man who achieved divine status through righteous living. This system, sometimes called "*the Great Chain of Being*" in Mormon thought, suggests that all intelligent beings exist on a continuum of development rather than in distinct ontological categories.

According to this worldview, God was once a man living on another world who, through obedience to eternal laws and ordinances, progressed to become the god of this world. Before His exaltation, He supposedly had His own god, creating an infinite regression of gods extending backward through eternity. This cosmology makes deity a status to be achieved rather than an essential nature to be possessed.

The implications of this system extend beyond mere speculation about God's past to encompass the entire understanding of worship, salvation, and human destiny. If God is merely an exalted man, then the worship due to Him becomes qualitatively different from the worship owed to the self-existent Creator. If salvation is ultimately about achieving godhood, then the gospel becomes a self-improvement program rather than a rescue from sin and judgment.

Doctrine & Covenants 132:19-22

And again, verily I say unto you, **if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant**, . . . Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; . . . and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, . . . and they shall pass by the angels, and **the gods**, which are set there, to their exaltation

and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a **fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever**.

Then shall **they be gods**, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. **Then shall they be gods**, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

The Biblical Doctrine of Divine Immutability

Scripture teaches that God is absolutely unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises. This doctrine of immutability stands in direct contradiction to any notion that God progressed from humanity to divinity. Malachi declares: **"For I the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed"** (Malachi 3:6 ESV).

This divine immutability provides the foundation for human confidence in God's promises and the security of salvation. If God could change in His nature or character, then His promises would be unreliable and His covenant commitments uncertain. The Mormon doctrine of divine progression undermines this fundamental assurance by suggesting that God was once different than He is now.

James reinforces this teaching: **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change"** (James 1:17 ESV). The phrase **"no variation or shadow due to change"** uses astronomical imagery to emphasize God's absolute constancy. Unlike the sun, which appears to move and cast shifting shadows, God remains completely unchanged.

The writer of Hebrews applies this principle specifically to Jesus Christ: **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"** (Hebrews 13:8 ESV). This verse affirms the immutability of Christ's divine nature and excludes any possibility that He progressed to deity from a prior state of humanity.

The Doctrine of Divine Eternality

The Bible consistently presents God as existing from eternity past without beginning and extending into eternity future without end. Psalm 90:2 declares: **"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God"** (ESV).

The Hebrew phrase translated **"from everlasting to everlasting"** uses the word **"olam,"** which indicates the most extensive duration conceivable. God's existence extends infinitely in both directions, making it impossible for Him to have had a beginning as a man or to have progressed to divinity at any point in time.

Isaiah reinforces this truth: **"Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no god'"** (Isaiah 44:6 ESV). The titles **"first"** and **"last"** assert God's eternal existence and unique deity, leaving no room for other beings to have preceded Him as gods or to succeed Him in divine status.

The Uniqueness of Creation Ex Nihilo

The biblical doctrine of creation ex nihilo—creation out of nothing—establishes that everything other than God came into existence through God's creative word. This doctrine necessarily places an unbridgeable gulf between Creator and creation that cannot be transcended through any process of development or progression.

Genesis 1:1 establishes this principle: *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"* (ESV). The Hebrew word *"bara,"* translated *"created,"* is used exclusively for divine creative activity and implies bringing something into existence without pre-existing materials.

This creative act establishes God's absolute sovereignty over all creation and His fundamental difference from everything He has made. If humans could progress to godhood, they would somehow transcend their created status and achieve uncreated existence—a logical impossibility that contradicts the very definition of creation.

The Blasphemous Implications

The Mormon doctrine of divine progression ultimately constitutes blasphemy against the true God by reducing Him to the status of an exalted creature. This teaching denies God's essential attributes of eternality, immutability, and self-existence, replacing them with acquired characteristics that could theoretically be possessed by other beings.

In Mormon theology, God was originally a human on another planet, with his own God (like us). He turned into God later.

Milton R. Hunter: “Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God—an exalted being. ... He grew in experience and continued to grow until He attained the status of Godhood. In other words, He became a God by absolute obedience...” [The Gospel Throughout The Ages, 104, 114-15.]

Mormonism's Official Curriculum Material:

“When we lived with our Heavenly Father, He explained a plan for our progression. We could become like Him, an exalted being... Joseph Smith taught: ‘[God] was once a man like us... God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ did’” [Gospel Principles (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2009), 275, 279.] [(cf. Teachings of Joseph Smith, 345.)][Also History of the Church, Vol 6, 306.][Also King Follett Sermon, Ensign, April 1971]

Furthermore, this doctrine implicitly denies God's worthiness of absolute worship by suggesting that He differs from humans only in degree rather than kind. If God achieved His status through progression, then His claim to exclusive worship becomes merely a matter of temporal priority rather than ontological necessity.

Brigham Young (Mormonism's 2nd president-prophet): “He is our Father—the Father of our spirits, and was once a man in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted Being.” [Journal of Discourses vol. 7:333]

Joseph Smith (Mormonism's founding president-prophet): “it is necessary that we should understand the character and being of God, and how he came to be so; for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity, I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see. ... he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did” [History of the Church, Vol. 6:305-306.] (From the famous King Follett Sermon)

John Widtsoe (Mormon Apostle): “Therefore if the law of progression be accepted, God must have been engaged from the beginning, and must now be engaged in progressive development, and infinite as God is, he must have been less powerful in the past than he is today.” [A Rational Theology, 24.]

B. H. Roberts (Mormon apostle & church historian): “God the Father was not always God, but came to his present exalted position by degrees of progress as indicated in the teachings of the prophet,” [A New Witnesses for God 1:476]

The biblical response to such diminishment of God's glory appears throughout Scripture. Isaiah records God's declaration: ***"I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols"*** (Isaiah 42:8 ESV). The exclusivity of divine glory and the prohibition against worshipping any created being remain absolute regardless of that being's level of development or exaltation.

The Trinitarian Framework and LDS Deviations

Orthodox Trinitarian Doctrine

The doctrine of the Trinity represents one of Christianity's most fundamental teachings, affirming that God exists as one being in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who share the same divine essence while maintaining distinct personal identities. This doctrine preserves both the unity of God revealed in the Old Testament and the plurality of divine persons revealed in the New Testament.

The Trinitarian framework provides the theological foundation for understanding the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the work of salvation. Christ's ability to serve as the perfect mediator between God and man depends upon His full deity, while His ability to represent humanity requires His full humanity. The Holy Spirit's role in regeneration and sanctification likewise depends upon His divine nature and personal distinction from the Father and Son.

LDS theology significantly deviates from Trinitarian orthodoxy by teaching that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate gods who are ***"one"*** only in purpose and testimony rather than in essence or being. This tritheistic understanding fundamentally alters the nature of God and the gospel itself.

Biblical Evidence for Trinitarian Doctrine

The Scriptures provide clear evidence for both the unity of God and the plurality of persons within the Godhead. The Shema declares: ***"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one"*** (Deuteronomy

6:4 ESV). The Hebrew word "*echad*," translated "*one*," indicates a compound unity rather than absolute singularity, allowing for personal distinctions within the divine unity.

The New Testament reveals the personal distinctions within the Godhead while maintaining divine unity. At Jesus' baptism, the Father speaks from heaven, the Son stands in the Jordan River, and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove (Matthew 3:16-17). This scene presents three distinct persons engaged in coordinated divine activity.

Jesus' high priestly prayer reveals both His unity with the Father and His personal distinction from Him: "*And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed*" (John 17:5 ESV). This verse presupposes both eternal communion between Father and Son and their shared divine glory.

The Great Commission likewise assumes Trinitarian doctrine: "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 28:19 ESV). The singular "*name*" coupled with the three persons indicates their essential unity despite personal distinctions.

GotQuestions.org: [Do Mormons believe in the Trinity?](#)

Mormons say they believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, Mormon doctrine denies the Trinity, teaching that the Father, Son, and Spirit do not comprise one God.

According to Mormonism, Jesus is a created being, the first spirit to be born of the Father (Mormon Doctrine, p.129) and a celestial mother (Mormon Doctrine, p.516). Therefore, Jesus could not be the eternal God or part of an eternal Trinity. **Mormons also teach that both the Father and the Son are men with bodies of flesh and bone** (Doctrine & Covenants 130:22; Articles of Faith, p 38); as two separate people, the Father and the Son cannot be considered "one."

Mormons also teach that Jesus is just one of many sons of God. Jesus is referred to specifically as "a son of God" in the Book of Mormon (Alma 36:17). Lucifer, or the devil, is another son of God in Mormon theology (Mormon Doctrine, p.163). Further, Mormonism teaches that the number of gods is increasing. Any man on Earth can one day become the god of another planet and populate it with children born to him from his eternal wife (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 345-354). Any one of those children can later become a god in his own right (Doctrine & Covenants 132:20). Thus, there is not just One God, triune or not; there are many, many gods (Book of Abraham 4:3).

Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, clearly rejected the Trinity. He wrote, "Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God. . . . All are crammed into one God according to sectarianism [the Christian faith]. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster" (Teachings, p. 372). Other Mormon writers such as James Talmage have confirmed Mormon denial of the Trinity (Articles of Faith, p.35).

The LDS Misunderstanding of Divine Unity

The LDS interpretation of divine unity as merely functional or purposive rather than essential fundamentally misunderstands the biblical revelation of God. When Jesus declares, ***"I and the Father are one"*** (John 10:30 ESV), the context indicates ontological unity rather than mere agreement of purpose.

The Jewish leaders understood Jesus' claim as an assertion of deity, as evidenced by their response: ***"It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God"*** (John 10:33 ESV). If Jesus had merely claimed unity of purpose with the Father, this reaction would have been incomprehensible.

Similarly, when Philip requests to see the Father, Jesus responds: ***"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"*** (John 14:9 ESV). This statement implies such intimate unity between Father and Son that seeing one is equivalent to seeing the other—a claim impossible to make if they were merely separate beings with common purposes.

The Christological Implications

The LDS departure from Trinitarian doctrine creates significant christological problems, particularly regarding the Incarnation and Atonement. If Jesus is a separate god from the Father rather than the second person of the Trinity, then the Incarnation becomes the embodiment of one god rather than the assumption of human nature by the eternal Son.

This distinction matters profoundly for understanding the Atonement. Orthodox Christianity teaches that Christ's sacrifice is effective because of the union of divine and human natures in His one person. His divine nature provides the infinite value necessary to atone for sin, while His human nature enables Him to represent humanity and suffer the penalty for human sin.

The LDS view, which sees Jesus as a separate god, cannot adequately explain how His sacrifice differs from what any other god might accomplish. If multiple gods exist with essentially identical attributes, then Christ's uniqueness as the only mediator becomes questionable, and the exclusivity of salvation through His name loses its foundation.

Conclusion: The Gospel at Stake

The theological issues examined in this analysis extend far beyond academic speculation to encompass the very heart of the Christian gospel. The LDS doctrines of universal divine sonship, human deification, and progressive cosmology fundamentally alter the biblical understanding of God, humanity, sin, and salvation.

These teachings present a different god than the God revealed in Scripture—a god who is essentially an exalted human being rather than the eternal, immutable Creator. They present a different anthropology—one that sees humans as divine beings needing development rather than sinners needing redemption. They present a different soteriology—one that makes salvation a matter of progression rather than justification by faith alone.

The stakes could not be higher. As Paul warned the Galatians, ***"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed"*** (Galatians 1:8 ESV). The gospel's exclusivity demands theological precision and doctrinal fidelity.

The Mormon doctrines examined here constitute ***"another gospel"*** that, despite sharing Christian terminology, presents a fundamentally different message about God's nature, humanity's condition, and the path to eternal life. The use of familiar biblical language cannot disguise the radical departure from biblical truth that these teachings represent.

For those seeking to understand the Mormon faith or engaged in dialogue with LDS believers, it is crucial to recognize that these differences are not matters of peripheral doctrine but concern the essential foundations of the Christian faith. The God revealed in Scripture—eternal, immutable, and existing as Trinity—stands in absolute contrast to the Mormon conception of deity as progressive and multiple.

Similarly, the biblical understanding of humanity as image-bearers fallen into sin and in need of redemption through Christ alone differs categorically from the LDS view of humans as divine beings requiring development and ordinances for exaltation to godhood.

The modern church of Jesus Christ must continue to proclaim the biblical gospel with clarity and conviction, demonstrating both the truth of orthodox Christianity and the errors of teachings that would undermine the uniqueness of Christ and the sufficiency of His atoning work. Only through careful attention to biblical revelation and commitment to historical orthodoxy can the church fulfill its calling to be ***"the pillar and buttress of the truth"*** (1 Timothy 3:15 ESV) in a world filled with competing claims to divine revelation.

The ancient words of Joshua remain relevant today: ***"And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"*** (Joshua 24:15 ESV). The choice between the true God of biblical revelation and the false gods of human imagination remains as urgent today as it was in Joshua's time. May the church choose wisely, standing firm on the foundation of apostolic truth while extending Christ's love to all who have been deceived by counterfeits of the gospel.