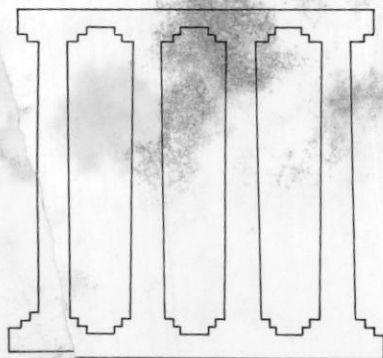


PILLARS OF MORMONISM

by Douglas V. Pond

A Kindly Review of Mormonism
in a Careful Comparison
With the Bible



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Chapter 15

MORMONISM'S TEMPLES

The 6-million-dollar Mormon temple near Los Angeles, California, and other imposing temples in various parts of the world have caused people to wonder, "Why such costly structures? What beliefs of Mormonism call for such an outlay of funds?" We shall endeavor to answer these, and other, questions in this chapter.

Joseph Fielding Smith throws some light on the above questions:

"PURPOSES OF TEMPLES. Why do we build temples? It is because the Lord commands it. For what purpose are they built? In order that sacred ordinances and covenants necessary to the exaltation in the celestial kingdom may be bestowed upon all those who are *worthy* of the exaltation."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 243.

We have already discussed some of the temple procedures, one being baptism for the dead taken up in chapter 10.

Another of Mormonism's "sacred ordinances" performed in LDS temples is celestial marriage. Celestial marriage, or marriage for eternity, as the LDS Church teaches it, has no validity outside a Mormon temple:

"KEYS REQUIRED FOR CELESTIAL MARRIAGE. Now marriage for eternity can be performed only in the temples. It cannot be performed anywhere else. Au-

thority by which such marriages are solemnized must be vested in the one who performs the ordinances, by virtue of appointment by the one who holds the keys.

"There is but one man living on the earth at a time who holds the keys of this binding or sealing power. No other man has the right to officiate in a marriage, or sealing ceremony, for time and all eternity, unless he has obtained the direct appointment from the one who holds the keys of this power."—*Ibid.*, pp. 73, 74.

To Mormons, the man who has this authority is, of course, the successor to Joseph Smith. This man is always the president of the church.

Further expressing the importance of celestial marriage as performed in the temple, Joseph Fielding Smith explains:

"MARRIAGE: THE COVENANT OF EXALTATION. Marriage, as understood by Latter-day Saints, is a covenant ordained to be everlasting. *It is the foundation for eternal exaltation, for without it there could be no eternal progress in the kingdom of God.* . . .

"There is no ordinance connected with the gospel of Jesus Christ of greater importance, of more solemn and sacred nature, and more necessary to the eternal joy of man, than marriage. . . .

"Marriage is a principle which, when entered, presents more serious problems than any other. It should be received in the spirit of patience and love, even that greater love which comes through the power of the Holy Spirit."—*Ibid.*, p. 58.

Note this declaration from the pen of Mormonism's chief doctrinarian:

"Marriage is the grandest, most glorious, and most exalting principle connected with the gospel. *It is that which the Lord holds in reserve for those who become his sons and daughters; all others are servants only, even if they gain salvation. They do not become members of the house-*

hold of our Father and our God, if they refuse to receive the celestial covenant of marriage."—*Ibid.*, p. 59.

Consider again that last sentence: "They do not become members of the household of our Father and our God, if they refuse to receive the celestial covenant of marriage." But we fail to find anywhere in the Bible that we become members of the "household of our Father" through such a marriage covenant. The apostle Paul points out the scriptural way: "But now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. . . . *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, *and of the household of God*" (Eph. 2:13-19).

Is it, then, through a celestial marriage that we become members of the "household of God"? No; it is through Jesus Christ. Jesus cares for our every need, and we are "*complete in him*" (Col. 2:10). It is through Him that we are reconciled to God. Christ is the One "in whom we have redemption" and "the forgiveness of sins," thus establishing us as "sons and daughters" of God. The Lord has no other way (Col. 1:14; 2 Cor. 6:18).

According to these Biblical statements, marriage—or unmarriage—has nothing to do with believers' condition in eternity and becoming "members of the household of our Father and our God." That access is *through Christ* in this life! He has said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). All of God's promises to the redeemed come through Christ (Gal. 3:28). The only condition is to accept the gift of Christ's righteousness, and "follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

As we continue with our study of this subject we shall discover the why of "celestial marriage" in Mormonism's temples.