

Mormon Salvation is Impossible

Salvation is Eternal Life

The key question of any faith system is simply this: 'how is one saved; how can one have eternal life?' Every faith system on our planet provides some mechanism by which we can be united to God, be in His Presence, or attain the ultimate life in eternity. As Christians, we believe that Salvation IS eternal life. For us, there is no difference. We believe there is one level of heaven, one opportunity for salvation, and this is called 'eternal (or everlasting) life':

John 3:15-16

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

But Mormons Have a Different Idea About Salvation

For the Mormon, 'general' Salvation comes to everyone on the planet, and is provided by the death of Jesus on the cross. It is simply the opportunity to be resurrected into one of the lower levels of heaven, and this is NOT the goal of the Mormon, and this is not what Mormon believers desire when they hope for salvation:

“Those who gain only this general or unconditional salvation will still be judged according to their works and receive places in a Terrestrial or Telestial kingdom. They will, therefore, be damned; their eternal progression will be cut short; they will not fill the full measure of their creation, but in eternity will be ministering servants to more worthy persons.” (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pg 669-670, 1966 Edition)

The goal of every Mormon is not 'general' Salvation. Everyone who believes gets this. The goal is 'true', 'full' and 'individual' Salvation that results in exaltation to Godhood. This requires far more than mere faith or belief. This requires an incredible amount of WORK:

“Conditional or individual salvation, that which comes by grace coupled with gospel obedience, consist in receiving an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God. This kind of salvation follows faith, repentance, baptism, receipt of the Holy Ghost, and continued righteousness to the end of one's mortal life. (D & C 20:29 & 2 Nephi 9:23-24). All others are damned - Even those in the celestial kingdom however, who do not go on to exaltation, will have immortality only and not eternal life - they will be 'ministering servants, to minister for and to those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding and an eternal weight of glory'. They will live 'separately and singly' in an unmarried state 'without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity' (D & C 132:16,17). Salvation in its true and full meaning is synonymous with exaltation or eternal life and consist in gaining an inheritance in the highest of the three heavens within the Celestial Kingdom - It is the salvation which saints seek - This full salvation is obtained in and through the continuation of the family unit in eternity, and those who obtain it are gods - If it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pg 669-670, 1966 Edition)

“Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life God lives. He lives in great glory. He is perfect. He possesses all knowledge and all wisdom. He is the Father of spirit children. He is a creator. We can become like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation. If we prove faithful to the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will become exalted, just like our Heavenly Father. Exaltation is the greatest gift that Heavenly Father can give his children.” (see D&C 14:7). (Gospel Principles, Chapter 47, Exaltation)

“Here, then, is eternal life - to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you,

namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 346-47).

“Now there is a difference between immortality and eternal life. Immortality is the gift to live forever. It comes to every creature. Eternal life is to have the kind of life that God has. All those who become servants will have immortality, but they who become sons and daughters of God will have the additional gift of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God. Eternal life is life in the presence of the Father and the Son. Those who receive it become members of the 'Church of the Firstborn' and are heirs as sons and daughters of God. They receive the fulness of blessings. They become like the Father and the Son and are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. What is eternal life? It is to have 'a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.' No one receives eternal life except those who receive the exaltation.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 2:8-9).

“Finally, in another usage familiar and unique to Latter-day Saints, the words saved and salvation are also used to denote exaltation or eternal life (see Abr. 2:11). This is sometimes referred to as the 'fulness of salvation'” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. 1979-81, 1:242).

There is No Free Gift For Mormons

While Christians understand 'Grace' to be the undeserved free gift of God, Mormons expect no such free gift of Salvation. In fact 'Grace' is dependent upon your good works; you have to EARN it! In fact, 'Grace' won't even BEGIN until you've exhausted yourself:

2 Nephi 25:23

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

“Grace is granted to men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness that are part of the gospel plan.” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 339).

“As with all other doctrines of salvation, justification is available because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, but it becomes operative in the life of an individual only on conditions of personal righteousness” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 408).

“One of the most pernicious doctrines ever advocated by man, is the doctrine of 'justification by faith alone', which has entered into, the hearts of millions since the days of the so-called 'reformation'” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Restoration of All Things*, p.192).

“...one of the untrue doctrines found in modern Christendom is the concept that man can gain salvation (meaning in the kingdom of God) by grace alone and without obedience. This soul-destroying doctrine has the obvious effect of lessening the determination of an individual to conform to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel, such conformity being essential if the sought reward is in reality to be gained.” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* p. 671)

“Certain saved-by-grace-alone fanatics flatter their followers into believing they can be saved through no act other than confessing Christ with their lips.” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 287).

“One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation.” (Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 206-207).

“Salvation comes by grace, faith and works. Unless a man will adhere to the doctrine and walk in faith, accepting the truth and observing the commandments as they have been given, it will be impossible for him to receive eternal life, no matter how much he may confess with his lips that Jesus is the Christ, or believe that his Father sent him into the world for the redemption of man... So it is necessary, not merely

that we believe, but that we repent, and in faith perform good works until the end; and then shall we receive the reward of the faithful and a place in the celestial kingdom of God.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith, 2:311).

Mormons Have to Be Perfect

In contrast to the Christian doctrine of grace, the Mormon concept of salvation requires personal, behavioral perfection. In order to be saved, one must attain perfection in this lifetime through complete, unflinching repentance and obedience to the laws of Moses, the teachings of Jesus and the words and direction of the Mormon prophets. Mormon prophets teach the idea that perfection is possible in this lifetime, and necessary for eternal life (exaltation):

“This progress toward eternal life is a matter of achieving perfection. Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation through that perfection which comes by complying with the formula the Lord gave us. In his Sermon on the Mount he made the command to all men: ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ (Matt. 5:48) Being perfect means to triumph over sin. This is a mandate from the Lord. He is just and wise and kind. He would never require anything from his children which was not for their benefit and which was not attainable. Perfection therefore is an achievable goal.” (Spencer Kimball, Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, p. 386).

“Exaltation, the pinnacle of proper desire of man, comes to him only if he is clean and worthy and perfected. Since man is weak and sinful, he must be cleansed before he can reach the exalted state of eternal life, and such cleansing from personal sins comes only through forgiveness following repentance...” (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 261).

“...to receive the Lord would mean loving him and obeying all his commandments: to receive the Father would mean to leave nothing undone toward arriving at personal perfection; and all this means exaltation and eternal life... If we measure up fully we are guaranteed limitless blessings.” (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 124).

The Mormon scriptures confirm an impossibly high standard of Salvation. For Mormons, their Salvation is dependant upon the completion of good works and Gospel Obedience. They are saved IF and only IF they are obedient:

3rd Article of Faith

We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

Abraham 3:25, 26

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; and they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; ...and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

Moroni 10:32-33

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

D&C 25:15

Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come.

D&C 88:35

That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still.

And the Mormon Prophets have also confirmed this notion of a required obedience and perfection:

*“Grace consists of God's gift to His children wherein He gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever would believe in Him and comply with His laws and ordinances would have everlasting life.”
(Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, pp. 353-354).*

“Complete obedience brings eternal life. But to be exalted one must keep the whole law ... to receive the exaltation of the righteous, in other words eternal life, the commandments of the Lord must be kept in all things.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith, 2:6).

*“To enter the celestial and obtain exaltation it is necessary that the whole law be kept...Do you desire to enter the celestial Kingdom and receive eternal life? Then be willing to keep all of the commandments.”
(Joseph Fielding Smith, The Way to Perfection, pg. 206).*

“If we obey this law, preserve it inviolate, live according to it, we shall be prepared to enjoy the blessings of a celestial kingdom” (Brigham Young, Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 404)

“In order to obtain the exaltation we must accept the gospel and all its covenants; and take upon us the obligations which the Lord has offered; and walk in the light and understanding of the truth; and 'live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God'” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:43).

Mormons Must Stop All PRESENT Sin

One of the conditions of Salvation for the Mormon is permanent repentance. You must STOP all sin immediately. Each member of the church must repent from all sin for all time, being careful not to repeat the sin in the future. In fact, if a sin you've abandoned and been forgiven for should reappear in your life, all the past sin will no longer be forgiven, but will actually be added back to your account:

Alma 11:37

And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins.

“All transgressions must be cleansed, all weaknesses must be overcome, before a person can attain perfection and godhood.” (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 16).

“True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them, a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light. Not only so, but to make restitution, so far as it is possible, for all the wrongs we have done, to pay our debts, and restore to God and man their rights - that which is due them from us. This is true repentance, and the exercise of the will and all the powers of body and mind is demanded, to complete this glorious work of repentance.” (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, p.149)

*“While we lack recollection of our pre-mortal life, before coming to this earth all of us understood definitely the purpose of our being here. We would be expected to gain knowledge, educate ourselves, train ourselves. We were to control our urges and desires, master and control our passions, and overcome our weaknesses, small and large. We were to eliminate sins of omission and of commission, and to follow the laws and commandments given us by our Father.” (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p.5)*

Mormons Must NOT Repeat Past Sin

Part of repentance, for the Mormon, is the requirement that you may NEVER return to your past sin! Of course this is impossible to even imagine, because all of us recognize our continuing sinfulness. But for the Mormon, to repeat a past sin would mean to forfeit the forgiveness of all past sin!

D&C 82: 7

Unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.

*“We can hardly be too forceful in reminding people that they cannot sin and be forgiven and then sin again and again and expect repeated forgiveness. The Lord anticipated the weakness of men which would return him to his transgression and he gave this warning (D&C 82:7)”. (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 360).*

*“To return to sin is most destructive to the morale of the individual and gives Satan another hand-hold on his victim. Those who feel that they can sin and be forgiven and then return to their sin and be forgiven again and again must straighten out their thinking. Each previously forgiven sin is added to the new one and the whole gets to be a heavy load.” (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 170).*

*“...the former transgressor must have reached a 'point of no return' to sin wherein there is not merely a renunciation but also a deep abhorrence of the sin - where the sin becomes most distasteful to him and where the desire or urge to sin is cleared out of his life” (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp.354-355).*

*“The forsaking of sin must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit making the same mistake again.” (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 208).*

*“No matter how brilliant was the service rendered by the bishop or stake president or other person, if he falters later in his life and fails to live righteously 'to the end' the good works he did all stand in jeopardy... for who can tell when one might slip across the line?” (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp.121/122)*

Trying Is NOT Good Enough

When discussing the impossible goal of perfect behavior with Mormons, you will often hear them say that they are only called to do the best that they can do, and that God will honor that and do the 'rest' of the work ('I do my best and Jesus does the rest.'). But this is clearly not reflected in the proclamations of the church and of Mormon prophets. Trying hard is never good enough:

'There is one crucial test of repentance. This is abandonment of the sin. Desire is not sufficient. In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his ways and started on a new path... the saving power does not extend to him who merely wants to change his life. Trying is not sufficient.' (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 163)

'Trying is not sufficient, nor is repentance complete when one merely tries to abandon sin' (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 164)

'It is normal for children to try. They fall and get up numerous times before they can be certain of their footing. But adults who have gone through these learning periods must determine what they will do,

then proceed to do it. To try is weak. To 'do the best I can' is not strong. We must always do better than we can' (Spencer Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, pp. 165)

You Can't Wait To Do It Later

In light of how impossibly difficult this type of performance truly is, many Mormons have recognized the difficulty and now claim that the good works and perfection don't have to be achieved here, but can be achieved in the next life, prior to the judgment of Christ, and the final placement of souls to one of the levels of heaven. But this also flies in the face of church teaching. While many Mormons may feel that they will have an opportunity after death to get things in order, this notion defies Biblical theology which tells us that this life is our only chance to respond to the message of Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...

Interestingly, LDS theology also affirms the reality that believers cannot wait to accept the Gospel or perform good works in another life. Mormonism teaches that this lifetime is a probation period, and the purpose here is to prove oneself worthy of exaltation:

Alma 34:32-33

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors... And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

Commenting on this passage, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, 'These people to whom Amulek was speaking had heard the truth and were not altogether ignorant of the plan of salvation, because they had gone out of the Church by apostasy. So he declared unto them that this is the day for them to repent and turn unto God or they would be lost' (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:181).

Alma 34:34-35

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world. For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.

2 Nephi 9:16

And assuredly, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord God hath spoken it, and it is his eternal word, which cannot pass away, that they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still.

2 Nephi 9:38

And, in fine, wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins.

'This mortal probation was to be a brief period, just a short span linking the eternity past with the eternity future. Yet it was to be a period of tremendous importance. It would either give to those who received it the blessing of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God, and thus qualify them for godhood as sons and daughters of our Eternal Father, or, if they rebelled and refused to comply with the laws and ordinances which were provided for their salvation, it would deny them the great gift and they would be assigned, after the resurrection, to some inferior sphere according to their works. This

life is the most vital period in our eternal existence' (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 1:69).

'One of the great purposes of this mortal probation is to test and try men, to see if they will keep the commandments and walk in the light no matter what environmental enticements beckon them away from the straight and narrow path.' (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pg.229).

'Because men are prone to postpone action and ignore directions, the Lord has repeatedly given strict injunctions and issued solemn warnings. Again and again in difficult phraseology and throughout the centuries the Lord has reminded man so that he could never have excuse. And the burden of the prophetic warning has been that the time to act is now, in this mortal life. One cannot with impunity delay his compliance with God's commandments.' (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 9-10)

'If today, you are keeping those commandments that are now in force, you are living a celestial law, and your chances are good for celestial glory.' (Apostle Orson Whitney, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1910, pg. 53).

'There is no progression between kingdoms. After a person has been assigned to his place in the kingdom, either in the telestial, the terrestrial, or the celestial, or to his exaltation, he will never advance from his assigned glory to another glory. That is eternal!' (Spencer Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.50.)

'Perfection really comes through overcoming... Christ became perfect through overcoming. Only as we overcome shall we become perfect and move toward godhood. As I have indicated previously, the time to do this is now, in mortality' (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 208-210)

Mormons Never Know If They Have Eternal Life

Based on the fact that Mormons never know if they have been good enough, they are left wondering if they can enter into eternal life. They have no assurance of full and complete salvation:

'There must be works - many works - and an all-out, total surrender, with a great humility and 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit.' It depends on you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes.' (Spencer Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p.325)

'This salvation requires more than repentance and baptism by appropriate priesthood authority. It also requires the making of sacred covenants, including eternal marriage, in the temples of God, and faithfulness to those covenants by enduring to the end. If we use the word salvation to mean 'exaltation,' it is premature for any of us to say that we have been 'saved' in mortality. That glorious status can only follow the final judgment of Him who is the Great Judge of the living and the dead.' (Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, *'Have You Been Saved?'*, an address at the 168th Annual General Conference of the LDS Church given on April 5, 1998)

Christians Already Know

Christians understand a single truth about an all-powerful God. If God is powerful enough to create everything in our universe, He is certainly powerful enough to get us home on his own, and He is absolutely unimpressed with anything we would call righteous or notable. That's why He does it all for us. That's why faith alone saves us and provides us with eternal life. Because of this, Christians don't have to wonder if they are saved in the truest, fullest sense. They don't have to wonder if they have eternal life. They already know because their salvation is not based on works, but on faith alone:

1 John 5:9-14

We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

God uses the word 'know' here for a reason. It is what is known as a 'present imperative' and it tells us that we can know right now. We can have certainty right now. God's testimony is that we can know today that we already have eternal life, because this free gift is not the result of anything we do, but based on our faith alone. This truth is validated over and over again in scripture. Joseph Smith never changed any of the following scriptures in his own 'inspired' version of the scriptures. These scriptures were an accurate reflection of the nature of God in ancient times, and they still reflect God's plan of Salvation for us today:

John 3:15-16

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

John 5:24

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

John 6:40

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 17:2-3

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 Timothy 1:16

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

The Mormon Gospel is Impossible

Mormons have a dilemma. In order to be truly saved, to be in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ, they have to reach PERFECTION in this lifetime. Faith alone will not save them (unlike the Christian). Trying really hard to be perfect will not be good enough and they can't trust on additional time in the next life to achieve this perfection either. According to the Mormon Scriptures and the Mormon Prophets, no one gets to this level of salvation, no one attains eternal life, until they have abandoned ALL past sin and have committed themselves to never repeating these sins again. They must stop ALL present sin once and for all, and maintain this perfection right up to the point of death. Considering all the infractions that are considered sin in the scriptures, this hope of perfection is an impossibility. It is safe to say that only one person on the face of this planet as ever reached this kind of perfection, and that person was Jesus Christ himself. The Mormon will never be perfect based on his "good works". When Mormons trust their own efforts for ANY part of their salvation, they offend God and relinquish the free gift he is offering. In essence, they are saying that they refuse to take the gift. Instead, from a position of pride, they simply MUST pay for it with their own effort. By rejecting the gift,

they place themselves in a position where they must trust themselves and their own perfection, knowing all along that this perfection is an impossibility.

Christians Are Already Perfect

Christians recognize that God requires perfection in that perfect place called Heaven. God clearly tells us this in the scriptures. If we ever hope to join God, if we ever hope to be saved and be in His presence, we are going to have to be perfected:

Matthew 5:48

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Yet we are also told in the scriptures that you can never attain perfection through any good works that you could perform:

Galatians 3:3

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

So how then can we be perfect if we can't do anything to attain our own perfection? Our perfection is bestowed upon us as the free gift of Jesus Christ. We are made perfect in the eyes of God by the sacrifice of the one truly perfect man, Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 10:10-14

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

The Misunderstood Doctrine of Justification

Mormon's don't understand the Biblical doctrine of justification because LDS theology teaches that believers alone are responsible for their own perfection, and therefore their own justification before God. The Bible clearly contradicts this notion, teaching that our own works cannot justify us (make us righteous) before God:

Galatians 2:16

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 2:21

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Galatians 3:10-11

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith.

Galatians 3:24-26

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

The Missing Doctrine of Imputation

Mormon's don't understand the Biblical doctrine of "imputation" because LDS theology teaches that believers must stand on their own efforts and will be judged (for eternal life) purely on their own righteousness. The Bible clearly contradicts this notion as well, teaching us that the righteousness of Jesus is bestowed upon (imputed to) us, so that we are not judged as the sinners we are, but as if we were Jesus Himself:

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Philippians 3:8-10

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Colossians 1:19-22

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight

Romans 4:19-25

And being not weak in faith, he (Abraham) considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Mormons Face the Impossible

Clearly, Mormons have a dilemma. They have a Gospel that is impossible to receive. The Impossible Gospel requires a perfection they can never achieve; unless, of course, they are willing to surrender to the Gospel of historic, orthodox Christianity. Mormons need to recognize that they can never be perfect. Even the Mormon scriptures recognize that there are far too many ways to sin:

Mosiah 4:29

And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them.

Christians understand that perfection has never been something that we could attain on our own. It has always been a free gift from God. And any Gospel other than the historic, orthodox Christian Gospel of Grace is offensive to God. To trust our own effort is to distort the Christian Gospel beyond the patience of God:

Galatians 1:7-9

I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel-- not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to change the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than what we have preached to you, a curse be on him! As we have said before, I now say again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!