

God is a Self-Existent Being, So Is Man!

What Does This Mean?

The Prophet Joseph introduced this new doctrine to the Church, Sunday, April 7, 1844, a little over two months before he was murdered [June 27, 1844].

It has long been perceived that the only “self-existent” being was God...there is none above Him. This essay will share several accounts of this “self-existent” or “self-existing” doctrine. This sermon has been referred to as the “King Follet Sermon.” It is food for thought and I am not the authoritative authority on this subject. However, I will lay out several scriptures that support this doctrine, in my opinion, why this doctrine is so profound and why organized religions don’t want to touch the subject.

Definition: SELF-EXISTENT: Existing by its own nature or essence, independent of any other cause. <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/worship>

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that God is a self-existent or self-existing being, and man exists upon the same principles! This means, that God has an innate potential to become a God and so does man, independent of any other cause. It also means that God never had the power to create the “Spirit” of man at all; therefore, obviously, God could not create himself. He has always existed and so has man. (Joseph Smith, King Follett Sermon, Pg 11:2)

<http://www.ldslearning.org/lds-king-follett-discourse-a-newly-amalgamated-text-byu.pdf>

Since God is a self-existent being and man exists upon the same principles, we can conclude that man is co-equal and co-eternal with God, which is what the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. confirmed! “Co-equal” because of our *innate* “potential” [or “authority” and “power”] to become a God, from the inside out, independent from anyone else; and “co-eternal” because we have always existed, as a self-existent or self-existing Spirit being [Abraham 3: 18]. When we view ourselves in a “self-existent” relationship with God it enables mankind to accept properly our accountability (agency for our own choices) to “become” like God and Christ, through the principles of righteousness *innate* to each of us. This doctrine does throw a wrench into “organized religionists” who think salvation in its highest latitude, comes through the “Church’s authority and ordinances,” when it doesn’t, it never has! Common sense says, it was not “organized religion,” with its ordinances and ceremonies, that existed before God was God, ... rather it was his *innate* divine potential, his self-existent nature that created the 1st God that ever

existed and that will be the same for anyone who follows that same *innate* path of righteousness. We either have the *innate* potential to become a God or we don't, that is the reality. And from what the Prophet Joseph taught and the scriptures teach, we do! [Matthew 5: 43-48; John 10: 34-38; John 17].

Our reason for coming here to mortality is to learn by our own experiences “eternal truths” that we have forgotten since we left our 1st estate. The mortal body is a completely new experience for us, it needs to be tested, tried, refined, purified and sanctified [Leviticus 11: 44; John 17: 19]. Because of the Fall and our choice to be part of it through Adam and Eve, we have been introduced to symbolism through “religious observances.” These religious and symbolic experiences create a mortal foundation for the “letter of the law” to be built upon; which can come through revelation and holy prophets, who can help guide us back to the presence of our Father in Heaven. Through holy prophets and personal revelation, we can come to understand again, our *innate* divine potential and self-existent nature which is found in the “spirit of the law!” In so doing, we become aware of our self-existent nature and can learn to not get (“stirred” up or fall into our “fallen nature” or “carnal nature” thinking) “to anger against that which is good” [2 Nephi 28:19-20].

Holy Prophets have warned us: “And others will he [meaning Satan and his minions, including false prophets (Matthew 7:15-16; 24:11,24) and false teachers] ...will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, and they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well...and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell” (2 Nephi 2: 20-23).

We must be careful in getting caught up in religious “formalism,” which is a type of “idolatry,” [see LDS Bible Dictionary, Holiness] where we place emphasis on the CONDITIONAL “letter of the law” and forget that we are “self-existent” beings seeking the UNCONDITIONAL “spirit of the law” and persecute or ostracize those who believe or see eternal truths from the same words in holy writ differently than others. Perhaps having a little civility, for “with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matthew 7:1-5).

To be self-existent is the “UNCONDITIONAL” journey into the attributes of moral virtue, godliness, and holiness of character; “in” our thoughts, “in” our words, and “in” our deeds. We can then understand correctly and properly “*how*” to worship and “*what*” to worship [D&C 93: 19], that we may become like them [the Gods]; by becoming “one” with them through the principles of at-one-ment [principles of righteousness, the attributes of godliness]. In so doing, we will

discover that our “worship” of God and Christ will be an inward journey of worship into our *innate* divine potential; we will become partakers of the UNCONDITIONAL fruit, from the “Tree of Life” within and recognize that we truly “**are the temple of the living God**” [2 Corinthians 6: 16] on earth and in heaven, (past, present, or future) whether we realize it or not. Our potential can never be destroyed, it is *innate* to every self-existent being and that is the gospel truth as I perceive it from the Prophet Joseph Smith and scripture.

So, let’s talk about Religious Symbolism for a moment that we might better understand our self-existing nature. What does the “*name*” of Christ symbolize? To take upon oneself the “*name*” of Christ is to be willing to take upon oneself that “self-existent” “nature of Christ,” and depart from iniquity completely!

“Nevertheless, the foundation of God [which is Holiness of Character] standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the *name* of Christ depart from iniquity.” (New Testament | 2 Timothy 2:19) “And under this head (Holiness of character) ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other *name* (Holiness of character) given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the *name* of Christ, (Holiness of character) all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. 9 And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the *name* by which he is called; for he shall be called by the *name* of Christ (Holiness of character) [See the word “Holiness” the LDS Bible Dictionary / it is profound and true!]. 10 And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take upon him the *name* of Christ (Holiness of character) must be called by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the left hand of God.” (Book of Mormon | Mosiah 5: 8-10).

The *name* and nature of Christ is UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, (Holiness of character) so if we are willing to take upon ourselves his *name* (Holiness of character) we are willing to reciprocate that love UNCONDITIONALLY to all and develop other divine attributes that symbolize Christ’s and man’s “self-existent” divine nature! It is a “win-win” relationship!

“And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me.

25 And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

26 For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and

they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

27 Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable and it is even as I am. *I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.* (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 38:24 - 27)

What type of “worship” creates “oneness?” Have you ever thought about how the “Gods” worship at this moment, or if they continue in worship in the present moment? There is a great mystery in this for us to understand! Their worship is continual, full of integrity, virtue and unconditional love as ours should be.

There is a unique characteristic that distinguishes the “Gods” type of worship from all other kingdoms of Glory. The “Gods” have learned “how” and “what” to worship, in the here and now, in this moment (and it’s not a person they worship!), whereas all other kingdoms of glory focus their worship on the “person,” “form,” or literal “image” of God, which type of worship is “formalism,” a type of idolatry, and this will keep one trapped in a lesser glory, worlds without end, unless they repent of it and change their thinking.

“How” to Worship? Is “In Spirit!”

“Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 For unto such hath God promised his Spirit. And they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (JST New Testament | John 4: 22-24).

It is interesting to note that the word “worship” means “excellence of character.” So “true worshippers” “worship” the “excellence of character,” or godliness of character, which is to manifest divine attributes; this is the key understanding to “true worship.”

D&C 93:19 seems to clarify this a little more:

“I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness” (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 93:19).

Notice, it doesn’t say “who” to worship, but “how” and “what,” which would be

“in spirit” and “in truth,” or in other words, the attributes of godliness and holiness of character!

By bringing both these scriptures together we can see clearly, “how to worship” is “in spirit” [Galatians 5:22-26] and “what” to worship is “truth,” [Ephesians 5: 9]. This is the *innate “self-existent”* part of each of us. We must learn to liken the scriptures unto ourselves to comprehend our relationship to the “god” within us and to “God” outside us which creates true “oneness” [John 17]. This truth has been the same in every dispensation; it is, therefore, the same yesterday, today, and forever. It never changes! The word “in” is another keyword to focus on where that worship is to come from. “Within,” [inside us, in us] is the only place where that “self-existent” principle originates and is therefore made manifest “in” our thoughts, “in” our words, and “in” our deeds! This is what constitutes the true “power” and “authority,” of god [John 10: 34] “made without hands” [Mark 14: 58; Colossians 2: 11].

Knowledge alone will not save us, but knowledge coupled with the understanding of (how to worship and what to worship) which is “in spirit” and “in truth” is the grand key that opens the door where Christ is knocking [Revelation 3: 20], waiting for us to open the door and sup with Him so that we may immerse ourselves into the feast He has prepared for us as noted in Galatians 5: 22-25 and Ephesians 5: 9. Our “work” is defined: ... when we are manifesting these godly attributes UNCONDITIONALLY, in every thought, in every word, and in every action; thus truly “becoming” like our Father and his Son. Herein is the mystery of the Holy Ghost [the 5 wise virgins] revealed “in” you, for you are the "Ghost," and you are the "Spirit" that is to become "Holy" and “one” with “god” within. This is the “oil” “in” our “lamps” [Matthew 25: 1-13]. We therefore, become the only true living temple of God on earth and in heaven. This is our *innate* “self-existent” potential and why we are here, in this moment, in eternity!

For “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law [in other words, there is no “outward law” that can define god/God, only the attributes of godliness inwardly can do this].

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”
(New Testament | Galatians 5:22 - 25).

“What” to Worship? Is “in Truth!”

Are you beginning to see and understand “**what to worship?**” It is not who, but “**what**” (D&C 93: 19). It is “truth,” that is “self-existent” “in” us! It has always been the same yesterday, today, and forever...this truth never changes, it is our choice until we become like Father, and Christ who have walked the same path and are still walking it today, because they and we are “self-existent” beings and the power and authority to do so is in us! [D&C 93: 23-24].

The real exercise of our faith always comes from within us, not outside us! Faith and virtue are not purchased in the marketplace or acquired by religious ceremonies. These principles are to be understood on a different level. In Lectures on Faith 3: 23; 7: 3 the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. said:

“Let us here offer some explanation in relation to faith that our meaning may be clearly comprehended: We ask, then, what are we to understand by a man's working by faith? We answer: We understand that **when a man [or woman] works by faith he [or she] works by mental exertion** instead of physical force [religious ordinances and ceremonies]: it is by words instead of exerting his physical powers, with which every being works when he works by faith.” (Lecture 7:3). That is profound!

“But it is also necessary that men should have an idea that he (god/God) is no respecter of persons; for with the idea of all the other excellencies in his character, and this one wanting, men could not exercise **faith in** him (god/God), because if he were a respecter of persons, they could not tell what their privileges were, nor how far they were authorized to exercise **faith in** him (god/God), or whether they were authorized to do it at all, but all must be confusion; but no sooner are the minds of men made acquainted with the truth on this point, that he (god/God) is no respecter of persons, then they see that they have **authority by faith** to lay hold on eternal life the richest boon of heaven because God is no respecter of persons [but of character only], and that every man in every nation has an equal privilege” (Lecture 3: 23). **This could only take place if we are self-existent beings!**

What good does it do to judge another man's religion as being right or wrong or that his authority comes from here or there or we are the chosen people because our lineage is from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... it is not up to “organized religion” or “genealogies” to tell you whether you are saved or not, but every man has **“authority by faith”** alone to **“lay hold on eternal life the richest boon of heaven because God is no respecter of persons [but of character] and that every man in every nation has an equal privilege.”** Amen to that!

Obviously then, “if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but *deceiveth his own heart*, this man's religion *is* vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*” (New Testament | James 1:26 - 27). Amen to that!

“Authority by faith” *what a beautiful phrase... which allows* every man and woman and child to clothe himself or herself in the robes of righteousness, becoming the “temple of the living god...” This ***“authority by faith”*** is the sacred “grace” of god/God innate to every person defined in [D&C 93: 11-40].

To awaken from the “letter of the law” that damn us if we allow it, and perceive the “spirit of the law” written in our hearts through our divine potential is to become at “one” with the god within and therefore “one” with God without (Christ and Father), this is pure atonement in its purest sense! How many people are aware and awake to this mystery of godliness?

What is organized Religion for then?

Since all potentially have ***“authority by faith”*** alone to become gods, because ***“faith”*** is an *innate* eternal principle, of power, authority, and truth; an UNCONDITIONAL attribute that every person has! So, what then is organized “religion” for? It is here simply to point us into the path of godliness and holiness of character, for “narrow is the way” [Matthew 7: 14]. To reach that potential, we must learn to LEAVE JUDGEMENT ALONE (which damns us) and understand ***“that every man in every nation has an equal privilege”*** to ***“lay hold on eternal life,”*** because of our self-existing nature! But “fallen man” does not share this beautiful truth, he does not understand it nor believes in it. Therefore, ***“as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion”*** (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 121:39).

The glory of the stars and moon (1 Corinthians 15:41: D&C 76) symbolizes those who worship God the Father and Jesus Christ as, a “person,” “image;” by getting get caught up in the “form and structure” of “image worship.” This means the ceremonies and ordinances become their “god” of worship. They perceive that God is always above them, at the top of the pyramid...and it is our “fallen nature” that ascribes to this false narrative; therefore, our ego keeps us in bondage, unless we learn to wake up.

“God is a self-existing being; man exists upon the same principle.” (The Words of Joseph Smith, pg. 346).

The scriptures teach this truth:

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, *Ye are gods?*

35 If he called them *gods*, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that *the Father is in me, and I in him* [this can only happen through the attributes of godliness, there is no other way for the Father to be “in” Christ and Christ “in” the Father but through the attributes of godliness (New Testament | John 10:34 - 38)].

And so it is with man: “Ye [mankind] were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; (Doctrine and Covenants | Section 93:23 - 24)

“If there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent (obedient to godliness) than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent (obedient to godliness) than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal. (Pearl of Great Price | Abraham 3:18).

Therefore, when considering the principles of the gospel, of the atonement, of sacrifice, of mercy, of justice, of holiness, of godliness, of moral virtue, of integrity and honesty; these concepts, when viewed through the lens of a “self-existent” eternal being become foundational; principle-based truths, relating to our potential natures, and all beings have the power and authority to transform their lives from the inside out, becoming “one” with God and He with us through these godly attributes of character. If this were not so, then we and God are not “self-existent” beings, and this lie is what the “devil” hopes you will believe in. The “Devil” or those who become devilish, fallen, prideful, and carnal in their beliefs, become exactly what they choose.

Let us look at this from another perspective: we all have two potential natures within! We may partake of the “tree of life” or the forbidden fruit from the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” The Garden of Eden analogy is really about you, and me individually. Therefore, which “self-existing” nature we feed, is the one we become! One will “damn” us from our potential “self-existent” power and the other will exalt us in the inner journey to godhood! The whole plan of salvation is “principle-based.” It is to be spiritually understood. It has to be so that **“authority by faith”** works properly within us all!

This is where “organized religion” comes in? It is here to help us, or as The Prophet Joseph Smith said, it is a “plan” created by the Gods to awaken us. Once we partook of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” we became fallen, asleep and forgot who we really were, we forgot our “inner god,” our “self-existent” potential power to become “one” with god/God, fulfilling the principle of “atonement” as Christ did! Let’s talk about what the plan of salvation really is...

It is all about working out our own salvation and what we perceive it is. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught if we desire to become “as” God is we must “assimilate” holiness in thought, word, and deed from the right fruit and the right tree. Hence the “Garden of Eden” analogy is truly about us individually...to see which “fruit” we will partake of. **“For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things”** (2 Nephi 2: 11).

The Devil hopes to lead people into what is called “formalism” or “worshiping” the “form and structure” or “Image of God,” getting caught up in the “letter of the law,” rather than taking the “inner journey” of being **“justified by faith,”** by immersing oneself into the “mystery of godliness” as Christ did; showing us by example how “true worshipers’ worship.” All are invited into this realm of thinking, where one is not above the other but all are co-equal and co-eternal, seeing “eye to eye” as God’s. There is no ego or worldly pride in God’s realm.

To be **“justified by faith”** [Romans 3: 18; Romans 5: 1; Galatians 3: 24] explains why it is, that some, who have not the law [that is the “letter of the law,”] and do by nature [spiritually] the things contained in the law, become “gods/Gods!” In other words, the “letter of the law” is for all those who have partaken of the “tree

of knowledge of good and evil” or who are or have been disobedient, who need to wake up spiritually and recognize that they can repent and forgive and “do by nature the things contained in the law” [Romans 2: 14]. In other words, when our minds and hearts are centered again in the “righteousness of the law,” through inner obedience to the law of “holiness” of character, it is then we receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, for they have fulfilled a higher law [our self-existent divine nature]. There are many scriptural examples of this [See Lectures on Faith 2: 55] [Romans 7: 14; 8: 6; 1 Corinthians 2: 14-15; D&C 29: 33-35].

Many who are brought up in organized religion and indoctrinated in the “letter of the law” struggle to understand the “spirit of the law,” and so God speaks to them in parables:

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, ***and should be converted***, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, ***That many prophets*** and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. (New Testament | Matthew 13:13 - 17)

“Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold,

some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (New Testament | Matthew 13:3 - 9)

Who is the sower? What do the “seeds” symbolize? Personalize it and you will “understand.”

Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the sower.

(New Testament | Matthew 13:18)

“When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside.

(New Testament | Matthew 13:19)

How many ways can one “hear” the word of the kingdom? It could be through “organized religion,” it could be by personal revelation; it could be that you simply manifest a natural disposition to “love” your neighbor and your enemies.

“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not *root in himself*, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth [or a different opinion] because of the word, by and by he is offended. (New Testament | Matthew 13:20 - 21)

To have **“root in himself”** is to understand your true [self-existent nature] and power within to become a god/God, independent of anyone else, having authority by faith alone to accomplish what Christ and Father became themselves through this process! Which process is the same yesterday, today, and will be forever!

From the beginning, it seems that the Lord and our Father in Heaven are gathering those whose “hearts” are righteous, virtuous, pure, and holy. It’s not about, “if,” we go to the temple, or how many times we go through the temple of brick and mortar but “if” the “spirit” of the temple is transforming our lives and our thoughts inwardly. We truly are the “creator” of our own living temple, “made without hands!”

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk-in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (New Testament | 2 Corinthians 6:16 - 18)

“And this I know, because the Lord hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, **but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell**; yea, and he has also said that the righteous shall sit down in his kingdom, to go no more out; but their garments should be made white through the blood of the Lamb. [the **“blood of the Lamb”** symbolized letting go of our fallen and carnal natures completely].

37 And now, my beloved brethren, I desire that ye should remember these things, and that ye should work out your salvation with fear before God,
(Book of Mormon | Alma 34:36 - 37)

How are we **“made white”** through the **“blood of the Lamb?”** “Blood” is red, how could that make us white? “Blood,” spiritually has always symbolized the “sins” of the “carnal nature” and the “fallen nature” [false beliefs] of mankind. The “carnal nature” symbolizes the lust and addictions of the flesh. Our “fallen nature” symbolizes the “beliefs” we accept and believe in that are false which damn us from our potential to become gods/God. We are **“made white”** when we repent of (forsake) our sins and our false beliefs and forgive!

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 ***If any man defile the temple of God***, [through false beliefs and carnal desires] him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

18 ***Let no man deceive himself***. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

(New Testament | 1 Corinthians 3:16 - 19)

The “spirit of the law” is not beholden to “organized religion” ... it is beholden to “the righteousness of the law” unconditionally lived and fulfilled by any who

embrace it and immerse themselves into it; it is an inward journey into our own inner “holy of holies!” [Romans 8: 1-6].

“Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? The answer is YES! (Put it in our symbology today... Therefore, if the unbaptized keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his unbaptism be counted for baptism? The answer is YES! “Baptism,” symbolizes our immersion (not into water, that is the letter of the law) but into the attributes of godliness and holiness, which is “the spirit of the law”).

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfills the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, (or a Mormon or a Christian, or any religion) which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, (Mormon or Christian or any religion) which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (New Testament | Romans 2:26 - 29)

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (New Testament | Romans 8:4 - 6) I love Paul... he is so easy to understand.

Therefore, the “Spirit of Elijah” [real temple work] or “Elias” is about being “spiritually minded,” hence baptisms for the dead and doing genealogy work for the dead is really about pointing our minds (our heart or spirits) to the spiritual genealogy of our hearts and being one with godliness and holiness of character with all those who have partaken of the fruit of the Tree of Life. Taking the names of the “dead” through the temple is symbolic of the “dead” works of carnality and sin that play out in our lives. We are to let go of the “dead” in us and re-awaken to the “spirit of the law.” Temple symbolism is all pointing to our spiritual “heart,” our potential “holiness” which seals us together, sanctifying and transforming us! Temple work is about spiritually being “born again,” “born of God” so that the “hearts” of our fathers and children are brought together into one divine spirit,

(immersed in righteousness) in the “fruit of the Spirit,” which is the “Tree of Life,” of godliness and holiness of character that we may be sealed to righteousness with god/God! “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled **in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4).

“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is **in** faith: *so do*.

“5 **Now the end of the commandment** [meaning the end purpose for the “letter of the law”] **is charity** out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: (New Testament | 1 Timothy 1:4 - 5)

“And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children. (New Testament | Matthew 11:14 - 19)

The whole purpose of the restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. was about connecting the people to the “**law of the Spirit**” that all may become “one” with god/God, hence the little lowercase “god” is our “self-existent” potential nature and the uppercase “God” is He who has already followed that process, i.e. the Father and the Son.

“Lectures on Faith” was the “Doctrine” of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for 86 years [1935 – 1921] and it was removed from our scriptures [Doctrine and Covenants, in 1921]. The true “Doctrine” of the Church was called “Lectures of Faith” for a reason because it taught the “**law of the Spirit!**” It was placed at the forefront of our scriptures, hence “The Doctrine” truly was “Lectures on Faith 1-7” and then came the Covenants and Commandments as we know them today. Let me ask a question, what should be at the “forefront” of our minds today? The “Spirit of the Law” [**Romans 8; 2 Corinthians 3: 6**]. If this is not the case in our lives, then the “letter of the law that killeth” [or damns us] will be our

master. The “letter of the law” must only be used to awaken us, to point us in the right direction.

If we accept the true principles of “faith,” we will embrace the truth that we are “*self-existing beings*” with the potential power and authority to become as God is, independent of any organized religion or anyone else in the heavens above or below?

This does not mean we are separate from god/God, it means just the opposite and merely defines how we become “one” with god/God through the attributes and character of godliness! The bigger picture suggests that we are all connected if we immerse ourselves into divine nature, which is true (atonement), hence the words “atonement” [which means at-one-ment with “god/God”] is depicting this relationship if we choose to see it and become it? This is for each one of us to decide: to be or not to be a part of god/God. To believe or not to believe in our *self-existing* power and authority, is the question we must face!

I believe we truly are “*self-existent*” beings or we could not be the true “temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6: 16) or the “Temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3: 16-17) “made without hands,” (Mark 14: 58; Colossians 2: 11) nor could we understand that the “kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17: 20-21); or “the power is in” (D&C 58: 27-29) you to become “one” with god/God (John 17: 21-26*). To begin the process, we must first become one with the “god” within before we can ever be one with the God without! “Lip” service doesn’t do it but “heart” service does fulfill the higher law (Matthew 15: 8; JS-History 1: 19).

“We say that God Himself is a self-existing being. Who told you so? It is correct enough; but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? Man does exist upon the same principles... The first principles of man are self-existent with God.” (Joseph Smith, King Follett Sermon)

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/04/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng>

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“If all religious teachers were *honest* enough to renounce their pretensions to godliness when their ignorance of the knowledge of God is made manifest” (Teachings of The Prophet Joseph Smith pg. 344); they would all declare as Paul, by understanding the symbolism of ordinances and ceremonies is here to awaken

us only!: “FOR the law (ancient and modern) having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, *can never* with those sacrifices (sacraments & ordinances) which they offered year by year [month by month or week by week] continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices* (sacraments and ordinances and priesthoods) *there is a remembrance* (symbolism) *again made of sins every year* (month, week, day, or moment, when we are ready to offer a “broken heart and contrite spirit,” with real intent). [parentheses added for clarity and understanding].

(New Testament | Hebrews 10:1 - 3)

Closing with these excerpts from The Prophet Joseph Smith King Follett Sermon:

<http://www.ldslearning.org/lds-king-follett-discourse-a-newly-amalgamated-text-byu.pdf>

“God was a self-existing being, man exists upon the same principle” (The Words of Joseph Smith pg. 346 Wilford Woodruff Journal April 7, 1844).

“We say that God himself is a self-existing God, who told you so, how did it get into your heads that man did not exist in like manner” (The Words of Joseph Smith pg. 352 Thomas Bullock Report April 7, 1844).

“We say that God was self-exiting, who told you so? It’s correct enough but how did it get into your heads, who told you that man did not exist upon the same principle” (The Words of Joseph Smith pg. 359 William Clayton Report April 7, 1844).

“I am going to tell of things more noble—we say that God himself is a self-existing God; who told you so? it is correct enough, but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles?”

The mind of man is as immortal as God himself. I know that my testimony is true, hence when I talk to these mourners; what have they lost, they are only separated from their bodies for a short season; their spirits existed coequal with God, and they now exist in a place where they converse together, the same as we do on the earth.

I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man, the *immortal spirit* because it has no beginning. Suppose you cut it in two; but as the Lord lives there would be an end.—All the fools learned and wise men, from the beginning of creation, who say that man had a beginning, prove that he must have an end and then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But, if I am right I might with boldness proclaim from the housetops, that God never did have the power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself: intelligence exists upon a self-existent principle, it is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it.

The first principles of man are self-existent with God;

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-7-april-1844-as-reported-by-times-and-seasons/1>

This is everyone's inheritance and birthright and my testimony of who Christ is and who my Father in Heaven is, both of whom I love deeply!

Essay by Kenneth A. Card / last edited 2/2/2022

Questions or comments welcome: kencard@live.com