

## **The Culture of the Gods**

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**NOTE: THIS IS AN UNFINISHED PAPER.**

## **The Culture of the Gods**

This is, or can be, to be sure, a daunting title for a paper. Nevertheless, it is a phrase that has given me much cause for thought.

I'm in the habit of asking myself many hard questions. And invariably these questions lead to other hard questions. Before I know it, I'm on a journey of discovery, or at least I hope it's a journey of discovery (as opposed to a made-up academic journey of the mind). It is truth that I'm after; that truth which is eternal. That truth which never changes. Those truths by which the Gods live. But, this will be explored a bit further in the paper.

For now, let me forewarn the reader that this is written from a believers point of view. I believe in God. I believe in the Gods. I believe in Heavenly Parents who have all-encompassing charity. It's almost a shame to put a mortal definition on Their primary attribute. As stretched as my mind can become in relation to understanding Charity, it is given to me to know that I have not a clue as to the depth, length, and breadth of this love They have for me, and for all of Their children.

I believe that there is truth eternal, and by some means not understood by us, it is truth that guides and directs all things in the universe. The Gods are Gods because They learn truth, believe truth, incorporate truth into Their life, and in very fact and essence, become truth. And one of the great truths which They live by is that they desire to share what they know and what they have become with others. These 'others' are us, you and me. They laid the groundwork for us by first becoming Gods themselves, and then *inviting* us to follow the blueprint which they became a God.

I enjoy writing, but I've found that I'm not very good in making my thoughts cohesive. It is my hope and desire that this preliminary paper will help to spark some motivation, desires, thoughts, ideas, and plans in those reading it to learn who the Gods are, what They are all about, how They have invited us to become like Them, how they have opened the way for us to do so, and when (now) we must be about this business of rising to our parentage of the Gods.

## **Levels on which to live life**

I am a social worker. I have studied human beings, both individually (I have a degree in psychology as well) and socially (thus the 'social' part of social worker). I am licensed to, and have facilitated, therapies of all types, including marital therapy, family therapy, and counseling for individuals with all types of maladies including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, dysthymia, addiction issues, abuse issues, etc., etc., etc.

My experience, both life and in the reading that I have done, has led me to conclude that there is a more right way and a less right way to live. There are, to be sure, some bad ways to live, but mostly people don't choose the 'bad way,' but rather a less-than-ideal way to live.

What do I mean by this? I mean that there are at least four different levels on which to live life. I have not yet met anyone who has lived a life in an "Outer Darkness" way. This is a way in which one has seen the light, and then chosen the dark path. Because I haven't yet met anyone who fits into this category, I won't explain this further.

I've met a lot of people who live a Telestial way of life. This way of life, as with the others, can be read about in D&C 76, where the descriptions of the different degrees of glory are found.<sup>1</sup> There are quite a few people in the world who have desires of a base nature, who would like to sin, and be happy in their sin. But, this is not the focus of this paper, so I will leave it to the reader to investigate this further if more contrast and information is desired.

I have worked with some people who have Terrestrial desires. There is more light in a Terrestrial person than in a Telestial person. Terrestrial people are good, honorable, god-fearing, 'nice' individuals. They desire to be good, and to live a life which qualifies them to see the Savior. This is a degree of glory, but a brighter degree than the Telestial glory.<sup>2</sup> The Terrestrial people have in their mind a vision of what heaven will be like, and will not be disappointed. But again, this is not the purpose of this paper.

The fourth level, or rather the first level, on which to live life is that of the Celestial plane. This is the Way of the Gods. We are instructed, rather thoroughly given our state of mortal life, but really quite incompletely when considering the eternities, what a Celestial life is like. As we read the scriptures and sayings of the Prophets, Seers, and Revelators (the Patriarchs), we can get a picture of what life is like for the Gods. This I have decided to call the Culture of the Gods.

### **The Gods' Relationship to Truth**

Truth is knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come (Reference).

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<sup>1</sup> 81 And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament.

82 These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus.

83 These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit.

84 These are they who are thrust down to hell.

85 These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work.

86 These are they who receive not of his fulness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial; (D&C 76:81-86)

<sup>2</sup> 71 And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn who have received the fulness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.

72 Behold, these are they who died without law;  
1.

73 And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh;

74 Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.

75 These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.

76 These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.

77 These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father.

78 Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun.

79 These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.

80 And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the Spirit.

Truth is eternal. It is neither created, made, nor destroyed. Truth is self-existent. It has always been and always will be.

The Gods are Gods because They become aware of truth, and set their lives in accordance with it. In my simple-minded way, I diagram truth like this.

Truth is already “there.” (Already ‘here’ may be a more appropriate term.) It exists. As Intelligences became acquainted with truth, and conformed their existence to truth, then they grew and progressed. Growth and progression come as a result of conforming one’s life with truth, and in fact, incorporating truth into one’s being, thus becoming truth embodied. The opposite of growth and progression, which is regression, is to be had by not following truth, and not living according to truth. When one does this unknowingly, the result is still regression, but as a transgression, and not as a sin. Sin is when one knowingly goes against what is known to be true.

So, the Gods become aware of truth, They accord their life with truth, and thus grow and progress. We, too, are in a similar position. We become made aware of truth in various ways. The Holy Ghost is the most common way. The Comforter shall teach us all things, we are told. Other ways include being taught by inspired man, reason, experience, the Scriptures, etc.

It is the desire of the Gods that we make our life in accordance with the truth. There are many people who try to make truth fit their untruthful lives. This will not work, because truth is immovable. It is something that cannot be changed to fit the situation.

We become more truthful when the truth fills us more. Thus, truth-full.

A word of thought is in order here about how full is full? As every person has a different capacity, and even every Intelligence has a different capacity, so also is our “full” different than another Intelligence’s “full.” The Intelligence of a rock has a certain capacity, whilst an Intelligence of an Einstein has a different, greater capacity. Those who have the humility, meekness, faith, knowledge, and righteousness of astounding degree have the greatest capacity for truth. It is those individuals who have the greatest capacity to become Gods. It is also these same persons who have the greatest capacity to become devils, for one can rise no higher than he/she can descend, and vice versa. Thus it is that Christ descended below all things, and because of this, he could rise above all. His capacity, and experience, of descending below all things, hollowed out his cup, so that his capacity was greater than all of us. It was the very fact that he suffered that he had the capacity to receive such great blessings. If we want to be where the Gods are, we must be prepared for the very same thing!

## **Culture**

A culture is defined as “to cultivate.” It is also, “The act of tilling and preparing the earth for crops; cultivation; the application of labor or other means of improvement.” Also, “Any labor or means employed for improvement, correction or growth.”

As a social scientist, I have observed, and read of the observations of others, on the various types of cultures. In our world today, there are thousands and thousands of cultures and sub-cultures. This has been so throughout the centuries, and in fact, was probably more pronounced in the days before mass media.

It is interesting to me to note that whilst the cultural values and cultural norms change, the values and norms of the Gods do not change. It is these values and norms that we must adopt into our life in order to live with the Gods. We must in very deed and faith live in a culture of the Gods.

### **What is our culture like today?**

Inasmuch as I have the most experience in my culture, I will address this first.

I have a personal culture, family culture, city culture, religious culture, state culture, national culture, and world culture. So does everyone.

My personal culture growing up was different than it is now. What changed? My life experiences, and my ability to both reason, as well as my religious experiences and the people with whom I associate all play a role in my changing culture. This is also true of everyone.

But, I can get lost in words if I keep going this direction. So, let me now address what is generally accepted in our culture, as a society, today.

### **The Culture of Utah and the United States**

There are similarities and differences.

Some of the similarities are, from my observation, a comfortable lifestyle. Homes are large, they are decked out with quite a few luxuries. We like things fast, and we like them our way. We like not only reliable vehicles, but vehicles that look good. Appearances are very important to us. We are *not* WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get). The outside is often seen as in control, self-assured, happy, and impressive. The inside is often full of insecurity, fear, sometimes anger, sadness, and a desire to “just be me” but a feeling that this can’t happen because of the image we have made for ourselves. Granted, these are my observations, but I don’t feel that I’m that far off, in speaking with friends, in counseling, and in being observant of our population.

Some of our differences are these. We tend to be much more concerned with how people perceive us than society at large. Trucks in Utah are sold in greater numbers than anywhere else. Why? We want to feel large, and this is one way. Our girls are “made up” in greater numbers than elsewhere. We want the Hollywood look. We are territorial. We don’t like it when someone else with different religious values comes into our neighborhood. We often tend to like others to do our thinking for us. Maybe this isn’t so much of a difference. We like to be in control, but we don’t like to take responsibility for our decisions.

But, again, I’m getting off course with what the purpose of this paper is all about.

### **Why is it important to understand**

To understand culture is to understand ourselves. I believe in the statement “We are blind to our own blindness.” Our culture has a hold of us in ways that we are not even aware. Our traditions offer us alternatives within limited avenues. Tradition told me that I was able to, after high school graduation, there were certain courses of opportunities open for me. My cultural tradition in a sense limited my options, or expanded my options, depending on how you look at it. Both of my parents are college graduates. I knew all the while growing up that a university education was not only a very real possibility for me, but also a probability. There are many people whom I know who did not believe this. Their cultural and family traditions taught them that it was beyond their realm of possibility.

So, I went to college, and continued in college until I had earned an Associates degree, two Bachelor’s degrees, and a Master’s degree. Then I felt that I was prepared to enter the world of work.

However, I was limited. I knew people growing up who had not received a college education. They had started their businesses, and became quite successful financially. But, as I looked at them, I came to believe, or rather, believed all along, that I was unable and incapable of doing such a thing. My tradition was limiting me. It is only now, after having been out of college for over 13 years, that I realize that my options still aren’t limited. That I really can be self-employed. And what’s stopping me? Only my own self-limitations!

Now, to get this around to things spiritual, which are the real substance, the real important stuff in life.

### **Spiritual Possibilities**

The scriptures have promises throughout that we can inherit the same Kingdom and Glory which our Parents reside in. This I know, because I have read the scriptures. But, do I really believe it? Is it really something that I think is possible?

If the answer is “Yes,” then the next question is, “How do I do it?”

This answer, again, is contained within the scriptures. We must become like the Gods to live with the Gods!

OK. So, what does this mean?

It means simply this. That in order to dwell with the Gods, we must become Gods. We must be, individually, like the Gods are. And since we can’t go there alone, we must be with our spouse like the God-spouses are. And since we can’t do it without children, we must do it by creating a culture in our homes that is a God-culture, wherein we and our children can not only “practice” being in a God-like society, but in actual fact, live in one.

Are we there yet? As I look at our cultures, both family and society, and even personally, I believe that we are not to this point, and in fact, often are looking the other way. The stuff that our culture tends to think is important is often in direct contrast with those things which the Gods think are important. This is what the rest of this paper is about.

## **The Attributes of the Culture of the Gods**

### **Baptism**

When we are baptized, we make certain promises. Some of these promises are to mourn with those who mourn, comfort those who stand in need of comfort, be willing to take upon us the name of God, bear one another's burdens that they may be light, and stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all places (Mosiah 18). These are some of the very first covenants (promises) that we make. When these promises are made, then we are held responsible for them. But, do we, even at this most basic of levels, follow through with our promises?

If we do, we are beginning to develop the culture of the Gods within our lives and within our homes. You will notice that to take upon us God's name is a rather individual matter, but the other promises all have to do with other individuals. We mourn with others, comfort them, bear witness to them, and help ease their burdens. One to four is the ratio. One of us, and four of them. Do you think that culture involves other people? From this ration, I believe it is intricate in this concern.

Baptism is, in very fact, a basic covenant that points us toward developing a culture of the Gods. It leads us towards what is known as Zion, and away from Babylon. It is incumbent upon parents that they teach their children about these covenants prior to baptism, so that the children make these promises with their eyes wide open. The Lord has said that this is possible at 8 years old. But many, if not most, are not well educated, both academically and of the heart, to understand these covenants.

From the age of eight, children should begin to realize of their own selves, that the Lord's culture, his values, his "important stuff," is different than that of the world. What the Lord considers important is NOT what the world considers important.

What does the world often teach? That we let others shoulder their own burdens at the least, or at the most, make their burdens more heavy by what we do, all the while thinking that we are doing them a service. Wow, I don't know if this pricks your heart, but it sure does mine. Even now, at 40, I am only beginning to see how I have acted, and felt, in direct opposite to what the Lord requires, and what I have promised to do.

### **Higher Covenants**

Without divulging sacred truths, one can readily peruse the scriptures and find that there are additional promises that the Lord's people are asked to make. As one makes and keeps sacred promises, one will grow in light, knowledge, faith, and righteousness. This in turn brings with it the opportunity to make additional covenants, which in turn bring about additional light, knowledge, faith, and righteousness. Thus one can see that it is indeed one eternal round.

### **Obedience**

### **Sacrifice**

The world says, "Go for all you can. Hoard what you can get. Keep it all. Do what needs to be done to get it and to keep it. Don't let others take advantage of you. To 'be nice' is wimpy. People will take everything that they can away from you, so you must do all that you can to protect

what you have rightfully worked for and earned. In fact, it would be wrong to give up something of yours, because enabling a free-loader is against the laws of heaven.”

Truth says that Sacrifice is

**Chastity**

**Law of the Gospel**

**Law of Progression**

**The Principle of Asking**

**Gifts of the Spirit**

**Gods’ as Individuals: The Attributes of Godliness**

Find the six from the Lectures on Faith

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