



## Where Did I Come From?

**B**ack in chapter 1, I had mentioned three questions that often weighed heavily upon me, from time to time. Those questions were

Where did I come from?

Why am I here?

Where am I going after I die?

Many people have voiced these questions, perhaps using different words, but the basic inquiry was still the same. Long before I ever bumped into Linda, I had asked different people what their thoughts were in these regards. Some were philosophy teachers in college, some were various ministers from various churches, some were friends, and some were family. None of them had a direct, concise answer to any of these questions. And of all the answers I was given, no two were ever alike.

Growing up through my teenage years, and well into young adulthood, I often toyed with the idea of going into the ministry. After all, I came from a very religious family. My family attended Sunday school and church worship services every Sunday. My grandfather on my mother's side was a minister. One of mother's brothers was a minister and one of mother's brothers-in-law was a minister. I had a first cousin who was a minister in an ongoing mission in Africa. Yet with all this influence around me and the great desire to serve God, something just didn't seem quite right. It felt as though something were missing.

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH MORMONS?

During the course of my six-week discussion with the Elders, I couldn't help bringing up the first question: *Where did we come from?*

Their answer went something like this, "We are, literally, children of our Heavenly Father. We lived with Him as spirits before we were born on this earth. Each of us was a unique individual."

Right now, someone somewhere is reading this and thinking, "Where in the world do you folks get these crazy ideas? What's wrong with Mormons?"

There was a premortal existence, also referred to as our first estate. To me it felt good, it felt right, it was as though it was something I had known all along but had forgotten somewhere along the way.

No matter what other churches may teach, there are those whose spirits are more susceptible to the things of God even though they may not have found these eternal truths. One example is found in a poem by William Wordsworth.

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory  
Do we come from God  
Who is our home.*

(William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.")

We dwelt in God's presence. We saw His face. We heard His voice. We knew Him as well then as we know our earthly fathers now. We are the offspring of God: "I have said, 'Ye are gods; and

all of you are children of the most High” (Psalms 82:6).

That being true, it means that each of us—you and I—have a divine spark within us. We have that potential to become like Him (we’ll talk more about this shortly).

We’ve already seen that Jesus (Jehovah) dwelt with God before he was born. We also learned that Lucifer, the devil, “and a third part of the stars of heaven” who followed him, also dwelt with God. These stars were “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he [God] hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 1:6). Angels are nothing more or less than those individuals who dwell in the presence of God. Too, we know that stars, those glowing pinpoints in the night sky, can’t and won’t follow anyone. The term is simply a metaphor used by the prophetic author for those angels—sons and daughters—that dwelt with God the Eternal Father. They failed to keep, or live up to, their first estate, which strongly implies there is more than one estate to keep. They were cast out of their habitation, or place of dwelling. Therefore, if they weren’t living with God at the time, then how else could they be cast out of His presence?

The chief apostle, Peter, clearly understood this great doctrine: “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4). Remember, they sinned in that they rebelled and sought to follow Lucifer’s plan rather than Heavenly Father’s.

In Job 38, God asks him, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4, 7).

It’s clear there were sons (and daughters) with God while



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He was in the earliest stages of forming the earth. It's clear too that we (those sons and daughters) had an understanding of what He was doing and why. As a result of that understanding, we “sang together” and “shouted for joy” because a place was being prepared for us!

Paul also understood this doctrine and the fact that God did know the spirits of mankind before they came to earth. If not, how could He justly appoint “the bounds of their habitation” on the earth? Consider the following:

“And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and *hath determined the times before appointed*, and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26; italics added).

The prophets were appointed in their time and their callings upon the earth prior to their coming here. We see this in the calling of the prophet Jeremiah, who was chosen before he was born:

“Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:4–5).

Can the concept be stated any plainer? *Before* Jeremiah was conceived in the womb by his father and mother, God *knew* him. *Before* he was born, God sanctified him. *Before* he was born, God ordained him to be a prophet. God selected Jeremiah while he was in his first estate because He knew him and knew what kind of son he was—one He could trust to act justly and righteously in the office of prophet to which he was

*foreordained*, not predestined. Let's take a moment here and explore the difference between the two.

To be *predestined* to something is to imply that no matter what one does, good, bad, or indifferent, the outcome will be the same. That thing, whatever it may be, will come to pass. Nothing could be further from the truth! It totally negates agency—the God-given gift of choice.

To be *foreordained*, as was Jeremiah for example, means he was called and set apart to that calling while yet a spirit, while he was still in his first estate, in the presence of his Heavenly Father. Once he was born, a veil forgetfulness was drawn over his mind (as is the case for us all) in order that he could move through his life exercising faith. Although one may be foreordained, one still has his agency. In this life, one can—one must—still choose between good and evil, right and wrong, just and unjust. Should one choose unwisely, the promised blessing of the foreordination is made null and void. If this weren't true and if life were predestined, then what is the value of faith?

“What about Saul?” you ask. Good thinking! Saul is an excellent example. Saul, as do many of us, acted upon the knowledge and information he had on hand at the time. Unlike the laws of man, with God ignorance of the law (to a point) *is* an excuse. Once the truth was made known to Saul—once he was shown the error of his ways and a way was provided to repent of those errors—he, using his agency, *chose* to follow another course. He repented of his sins, was baptized for the remission of those sins, received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and moved in a totally new direction, one leading back into the presence of his Heavenly Father. Sadly, not everyone chooses to accept and follow the truth when it's been placed before them. Just look at the Sadducees and the Pharisees as one example.

Getting back to the preexistence, Paul, writing to Titus, one