

Is Mormonism Christian? This may seem like a puzzling question to ask, since Christians and Mormons share a number of characteristics: both recognize Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and claim Him as central to their faith; both believe the Bible is the Word of God; both are pro-life, pro-traditional marriage, and pro-family, and have high moral standards.

Mormons insist that Jesus Christ is central to their as evidenced by their official name, **the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**. Furthermore, Mormons' commitment to high moral standards and strong families is impressive.

But there are significant differences between genuine Christianity and Mormonism.

The source of these differences is authority. **Christians insist that the Bible is our sole source of authority for faith and practice.**

Mormonism teaches that the canon of Scripture was not closed when the Bible was completed.

Mormons have three sources in addition to the Bible, all of which they believe contain God's revelations: (1) the *Book of Mormon*, (2) *Doctrine and Covenants*, and (3) the *Pearl of Great Price*.



However, Mormons follow the teachings of these three books even when they contradict the Bible. Mormonism teaches that the Bible is the Word of God "as far as it is translated correctly." Then whenever a Mormon belief contradicts Scripture, the Mormons say that particular part of Scripture is translated incorrectly, and that the correct translation is in one of the Mormon scriptures (*The Maze of Mormonism*, p. 131). As a result, the Bible is rejected as the infallible Word of

God.

They state things such as, "The Bible is considered usable, but suspect due to its many errors and missing parts" (Articles of Faith No. 8, *Ensign*, January 1989, pp. 25, 27).

Mormons also believe God continues to give revelation through their prophets and apostles. As a result, Mormonism can and does change its doctrines and practices.

Having laid this foundation, let's look at three basic differences between Biblical Christianity and Mormonism:

Mormonism Has a Different God

1. Is there more than one true God?

The Bible teaches, and Biblical Christians through the ages have always believed, that there is **one true and living God** who created and rules all things, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **though personally distinct, are the one true God**, (Genesis 1:1-31; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6-8, 24; Matthew 28:19-20; John 1:1; 10:30; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 13:14).

By contrast, **Mormonism teaches that many gods made the world** (Book of Abraham 4:1-31) and that **the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate Gods** (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 41-42). It also teaches that the **Father has a wife**, our heavenly mother, and that we are "literally" the offspring of **divine parents** (*Ensign*, Jan. 1989).

2. Was God the Father once a man like us?

The Bible teaches, and orthodox Christians through the ages have always believed, that **God is Spirit** (John 4:20-24; 1 Timothy 6:15, 16) **and that He has eternally existed as the all-powerful God** (Psalm 90:2; 102:12, 25-27; Isaiah 40:28; 43:10; 1 Timothy

1:17).

By contrast, **the LDS Church teaches that God the Father was once a man like us** who progressed to become a God and has a body of flesh and bone (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22). It affirms Joseph Smith's teaching that God is "**an exalted being**" who "**was once a man like us,**" and Lorenzo Snow's statement, "**As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be**" (*Gospel Principles* [2009], 275, 279; *Presidents of the Church Student Manual* [2003], 89; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* [2011], 71).

Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth LDS Church President (1970-1972), illustrates the Mormon belief about God:

"Our Father in heaven, according to the Prophet, had a Father, and since there has been a condition of this kind through all eternity, each Father had a Father, until we come to a stop where we cannot go further, because of our limited capacity to understand" (*Doctrines of Salvation* [1955], 2:45).

Mormonism Has a Different Gospel

Biblical Christians believe the Gospel is summarized in John 3:16 - "*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.*"

Salvation is a matter of faith - believing the Gospel - repenting of our sins and receiving Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.

Because Mormons believe that we originally lived with God as spirits before being sent to this world, salvation in Mormonism means returning to God after this life.

"If you are to return to live with God eternally, you must keep His commandments, accept Jesus Christ's Atonement, and follow His example while you are on

Earth." (*"The Eternal Nature of God's Children"* at Mormon.org.).

Mormons believe salvation is attained through a combination of faith in the atonement of Christ and good works, with emphasis on the good works:

- believing in God and Jesus
- doing good (being kind, fair, loving, etc.)
- developing moral character
- repenting of sins and attaining forgiveness through the atonement of Christ
- being baptized and participating in other Mormon ordinances
- spreading the Mormon faith

It is also necessary to recognize Joseph Smith as a prophet:

"No salvation without accepting Joseph Smith. If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet and if he told the truth...then this knowledge is of the most vital importance to the entire world. No man can reject that testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1)

Mormonism Has a Different Goal

Christians understand that they were saved for a purpose – to glorify God forever.

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." -- Ephesians 1:11-12

Mormons, on the other hand, see themselves as being in a process to becoming gods:

"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..." (*Teachings of the Prophet, Joseph Smith*, p. 346).

This is called "eternal progression." If a couple marries according to Mormon ceremony, and each lives an obedient life, they may attain godhood at the resurrection.

Conclusion:

Mormonism is not just another branch of Christianity, it is another religion. Mormons are free to believe as they choose—a freedom we have no desire to infringe upon—but they should carefully consider this warning from God's Word:

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

—**Galatians 1:8**

The "Mormon Way of Salvation" is a way of works, but the Bible teaches that salvation is a way of Grace.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

—**Ephesians 2:8-9**

The "Mormon Way" leads to death and eternal damnation, but the Bible way leads to life and everlasting joy. I urge you to choose life!

The Bible says in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." You can do that by sincerely praying this simple prayer:

"God, I know that I have sinned against you. I believe Jesus Christ, your Son died for me, that He arose from the dead, and wants to save me. Right now I ask you to forgive my sins and save me for Jesus sake. Amen"

**For Further Information:
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THE TRUTH ABOUT MORMONISM



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By Tom Stiles

