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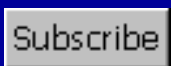
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Is Mormonism Christian?

The question above actually can be phrased in several ways:

1. 'Is the Mormon church a Christian denomination?' **NO**. Mormonism is not Christian because it **denies some of the essential doctrines** of Christianity, including: 1) the deity of Christ, 2) salvation by grace, and 3) the bodily resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, Mormon doctrine contradicts the Christian teaching of monotheism and undermines the authority and reliability of the Bible. The evidence for these statements is documented in section 3 below.
2. 'Are Mormons Christians?' **LIKELY NOT**, if they believe the major doctrines of their church.
3. 'Can a Mormon be a Christian?'. **POSSIBLY**. Only God knows what each person believes (and why) regarding His Son, Jesus Christ. But as a person stays in the Mormon church, absorbs and accepts Mormon teaching, doctrine and 'latter-day revelation', the chances of answering the question in the affirmative approach zero. The key question Mormons must answer is '**WHO is the Jesus they believe in?**'

In the New Testament book of 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul warns of "**another Jesus** whom we have not preached... a **different spirit** which you have not received... a **different gospel** which you have not accepted" (2 Cor. 11:4).

In the New Testament book of Galatians, Paul again warns: "But even if we or **an angel from heaven should preach a gospel** other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:8).

Ironically, this latter warning is a nearly **exact description of how the Mormon church was founded**:

- In 1820, Joseph Smith Jr., age 14, went into the woods near Palmyra, New York to pray concerning the different denominations of Christianity. Allegedly, God the Father and Jesus appeared to him and told him not to join any of those churches. Three years later **an angel named Moroni**, the son of the leader of a people called the Nephites who had lived in the Americas

around 400 AD, appeared to Smith and told him that Smith had been chosen to translate a book written on golden plates by Moroni's father. Smith claimed to receive the plates along with instructions to begin the translation, which was published in 1830 as the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is supposedly the account of an ancient people who came from the Middle-East to the Americas. Smith claimed that during the translation process, John the Baptist appeared to him and ordained him to accomplish the divine **work of restoring the true church by preaching the true gospel** which, allegedly, had been lost from the earth. From 1833-1835, a collection of additional 'revelations from God' to Joseph Smith were published by the LDS church as the '[Doctrine and Covenants](#)'. In 1880 another work, the '[Pearl of Great Price](#)', was also added to the Mormon body of 'scripture'.

- The Mormon view of the Bible is summed up in a statement by the most famous Mormon apologist: "The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity - manuscripts which passed through the hands of **uninspired** men who **changed** many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. **Deletions** were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been **lost**. As a consequence, **those who rely upon it alone** [the Bible] **stumble and are confused**" (Bruce McConkie, in [The Ensign](#), December 1985, p 55).

In the material below, I examine the major doctrines of the Mormon church and compare them to those taught by orthodox Christianity. The reader can judge whether or not Mormon teachings describe a "different Jesus" and a "different gospel".

1. A [Word to Mormons](#). If you are a Mormon, please read the material in section 1 before you proceed.

2. Claims Made by the Mormon Church. Section 2 gives background information on the LDS (Mormon) church, their statements regarding other churches, and their claims about what constitutes 'scripture'.

- claims to be [Christian](#)
- claims to be the [only true Church](#)
- the truth of the Mormon church should be confirmed by an [inner feeling](#)
- only [Mormon scriptures are considered reliable](#), not the Bible
- claims to receive [modern-day revelation](#) that supercedes Biblical teaching

3. Mormon Doctrine Compared to Biblical Doctrine. Section 3 is the largest section of the material (>50 pages). It is intended to focus on Mormon teaching about 4 essential subjects. The approach taken throughout is to simply quote original sources, both Biblical and Mormon, with minimal commentary. The reader can

decide if there is a conflict between the two and is encouraged to look up the original materials. Each of the four sections is indexed to a summary table comparing Mormon with Biblical beliefs.

- Mormon teachings about [God](#)
- Mormon teachings about [Jesus](#)
- Mormon teachings about [salvation](#)
- Mormon teachings about [man](#)

4. Mormon Literature and Leaders. This reference section gives more information on source materials plus brief descriptions of the people and books quoted in sections 2 and 3. It is important to know the background because many of the Mormon authors spoke in an official capacity or claimed to have direct revelation from God. If Mormons argue that their prophets weren't speaking authoritatively, they haven't read the [original quotations of their leaders](#).

5. Unique Mormon Definitions. Mormons, especially LDS missionaries, use many of the same Biblical terms familiar to Christians. Yet most of these terms carry different meanings, making it critically important to define those terms.

6. Other Serious Problems with Mormonism. Major doctrinal issues are covered above, but there are many other difficulties and inconsistencies with Mormonism. In this section, I've made a partial list of these and given some useful starting points for further investigation. The serious truth-seeker should examine each of these topics.

7. Topical Index to this site. A different way to access most of this material.

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References: Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Man

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section titled "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. The Mormon church teaches that man was a pre-existent spirit and that mankind is of the same species as God. Our origin is supposed to have been as procreated children of God, born as spirits in some other realm. In that spirit world existence we progressed as far as was possible, but to become truly like our Heavenly Father we needed to obtain physical bodies. We also needed to learn the difference between good and evil. Since our Heavenly Father has progressed so far that He cannot allow evil into His presence, it was necessary for us to leave Him for some place where we could encounter and overcome evil ourselves:

- "The mind of man is as immortal as God Himself...**God never did have the power to create the spirit of man** at all" (Times and Seasons 5:615 and History of the Church 6:310-311).
- "We were **first begotten as spirit children in heaven** and then born naturally on earth" (Journal of Discourses, 4:218).
- "**Before coming to this earth, all humans were begotten** by our heavenly parents and were born with spirit bodies" (Mormon Doctrine p. 428, 516-17).
- "all had a **previous existence**, thousands of years ago, in the heavens, in the presence of God" (Journal of Discourses 1:62).

So, according to Mormon teaching, this world was prepared as a school, where we have been sent to obtain physical bodies and to learn the lessons of mortality:

- President Spencer W. Kimball stated: "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" (The Miracle of Forgiveness p. 5).

According to Mormon teaching, two of man's older brothers, Jesus and his spirit brother Lucifer, both wanted to be savior. When Jesus was chosen, Lucifer rebelled and convinced one third of the spirit brothers to fight with him and revolt. **All pre-mortal humans participated in this war.** Those who fought on the side of Lucifer became the demons. Those who fought most valiantly on the side of Jesus and Elohim were born in Mormon families.



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Milton R. Hunter summarized this doctrine by stating that "we are as eternal as God Himself. But to achieve perfection and godhood, we must go through at least four stages of life: **In the first stage each of us were conscious eternally existing beings called 'intelligences'**. In that realm, we experienced good and evil, love and hate, free agency and so on until we had completed our work there" (The Gospel Trough the Ages, pp. 126-129).

2. The Bible clearly teaches that God created Adam, the first man, and all other men after him. This is in direct contrast with the Mormon teaching that man had a pre-existent life before being put on this earth.

- "And **God created man** in His own image, in the image of God **He created him**; male and female **He created them**" (Gen 1:27).
- "Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and **forms the spirit of man within him**" (Zech. 12:1).
- "Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, **who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it**" (Is 42:5).
- "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).
- "But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and **all of us are the work of Your hand**" (Is. 64:8).
- "Where were you [man] when I [God] laid the foundation of the earth?" (Job 38:4).
- One verse commonly used by Mormon missionaries is Jer. 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you..." But this verse is not talking about pre-existence. It is talking about God's ordination and appointment of Jeremiah to be a prophet to his nation. Look at the whole verse: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and **before you were born I consecrated you**; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."
- How could Jesus say this if the people he addressed were pre-existent with Him? "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And I will declare to them, '**I never knew you**; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matt. 7:21-23).
- 1 Cor. 15:46-50 says, "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. **The first man is from the earth**, earthy; the second man is from heaven". He mentions the nature of man in the proper order: natural then spiritual. Paul continues on, "As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

The Mormon doctrine about pre-existent spirits is linked to their teaching about [eternal progression](#). The argument goes like this: 1) Jesus was eternally existent (which is biblical); 2) [Jesus progressed from a man to become a god](#); 3) therefore man must also be eternally existent if he can progress to become a god.

3. The Mormon church teaches that God, men, angels, and devils, are of the same nature, but at different levels of progression ([Mormon Doctrine](#) p.238-239, 192-195; [Gospel Principles](#) p.9; [Gospel Through the Ages](#) p.15; [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#) p.345, 346, 370). For example:

- LDS Apostle Parley P. Pratt wrote, "God, angels, and men are **all of one species, one race**, one great family, widely diffused among the planetary systems as colonies, kingdoms, nations, etc...**Angels are of the same race as men**. They are, in fact, men who have passed from the rudimental state to the higher spheres of progressive being...They have not a single attribute that man has not. But their attributes are more matured, or more developed, than the attributes of men in this present sphere of existence" ([Key to the Science of Theology](#), 1978 Deseret Book reprint, pg. 21,69).
- [Brigham Young](#) claimed, "Angels are those beings who have been on an earth like this, and have passed through the same ordeals that we are now passing through...**They are persons who have lived upon an earth**, but did not magnify the Priesthood in that high degree that many others have done who have become Gods, even the sons of God. Human beings that pertain to this world, who do not magnify or are not capable of magnifying their high calling in the Priesthood and receive crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives, will also, when they again receive their bodies, become angels and will receive a glory" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 9:102).
- B. H. Roberts asks, ""What are angels? They are intelligences of the human species. Many of them are offspring of Adam and Eve. That is they are men, who have, like Enoch or Elijah, been translated; or, like Jesus Christ, been raised from the dead; consequently they possess a material body of flesh and bones" ([The Mormon Doctrine of Deity](#), pg. 256).
- The Mormon view of angels is linked to their belief that the angel Moroni, who supposedly appeared to Joseph Smith. According to LDS tradition, Moroni was once a human and a commander in the Nephite army (a supposedly ancient people of the Americas). Moroni was instructed by his father Mormon to bury the gold record just prior to the Nephites' annihilation by their dark-skinned Lamanite enemies. These plates would later be "translated" by Joseph Smith and eventually come to be known as the [Book of Mormon](#).

The Mormon church also teaches that man may progress to become a god. Therefore, they also teach that "God was once a man who achieved godhood". In Mormon theology, those who achieve godhood will have spirit children who will worship and pray to them just as we worship and pray to God the Father ([Gospel Principles](#), p.290). This has been taught by a large number of prominent LDS leaders, including its founders:

- [Joseph Smith](#) taught: "I will prove that the world is wrong, by showing what God is...**God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man**, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret...I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea**, and take away the veil, so that you may see" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.345);
- [Joseph Smith](#) continues: "God himself...is a **man** like unto one of yourselves...God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth...You have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**" ([Times and Seasons](#), vol.5, pp.613-614); "Here then is eternal life---to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**...the same as all Gods have done before you...To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, **until you arrive at the station of a God**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.346-347).

For **more complete coverage** of this doctrine, refer to the section on [eternal progression](#).

4. The Bible teaches that God, men and angels are separate beings of different nature.

According to the Bible, men and angels are created whereas God existed from eternity. Therefore the idea of men turning into angels has no biblical support. The Bible declares that angels are a distinct creation of God; in other words, an angel was created as such, and is not a being that has undergone some sort of spiritual development or physical evolution.

- Psalm 148:2,5 clearly demonstrates that angels were created as angels when it says, "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts...Let them praise the name of the LORD: for **he commanded, and they were created.**"
- Colossians refers to both men and angels: "For by Him [Jesus] **all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth**, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or **rulers or authorities** --- all things have been

created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

5. Mormon doctrine teaches that Adam's fall was a 'fall upward' and it was not sinful.

Mormonism maintains that Adam's sin was necessary for the propagation of the human race: As Mormon scriptures state:

- "Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy" (Book of Mormon, [2 Nephi 2:25](#)).
- "And in that day Adam blessed God...saying...for because of my transgression my eyes are opened and in this life I shall have joy" (Pearl of Great Price, [Book of Moses 5:10-11](#)).

Mormon writers explain:

- Adam's sin was "a necessary step in the plan of life and a **great blessing** to all mankind" ([Gospel Principles](#), p.31).
- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "The fall of Adam came as a **blessing in disguise**...nor do I accuse Adam of a sin...it is not always a sin to transgress a law...we can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits as being a sin" (Doctrines of Salvation 1:114-115).
- "Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction. He fell toward the goal...Adam fell, but **he fell upward**" (Deseret News, p.7, July 31, 1965)
- John A. Widtsoe stated: "Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden "became a **necessary and honorable act** in carrying out the plan of the Almighty" (Joseph Smith---Seeker After Truth, p.160).

Is this Mormon teaching inconsequentially different from Paul the Apostle's exposition in Romans 5:12-21? No:

- "Mormonism rejects the notion that man's condition is best described by 'depravity'. Nowhere within Mormon theology is its optimism concerning man's natural condition more apparent than in this denial of the Christian doctrine of original sin" (Owen Kendall White, Jr., The Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy", p.101-104, University of Utah thesis, June 1967).

6. The Bible teaches that Adam's sin caused spiritual and physical death for all

men:

- "Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and **death through sin**, and so **death spread to all men**, because all sinned (Rom. 5:12).
- "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] the **many died**" (Rom. 5:15).
- "for on the one hand [Adam] the **judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation**" (Rom. 5:16).
- "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], **death reigned** through the one [Adam]" (Rom. 5:17).
- "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men" (Rom. 5:18).
- "For as **through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners**" (Rom. 5:19).

Man has been punished because he thought he could make himself to be like God: Ez 28:1-10:

- "Yet you are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God" (Ez. 28:2).
- "Because you have made your heart Like the heart of God...I will bring strangers upon you...They will bring you down to the pit" (Ez. 28:6-8).
- "Will you still say, 'I am a god', ...Though you are a man and not God" (Ez. 28:9).

Man's sin was not the result of the plan of God:

- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and **He Himself does not tempt anyone**. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (James 1:13-15).
- "Then to Adam He [God] said... '**Cursed** is the ground because of you; In **toil** you will eat of it all the days of your life...By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground...For you are dust, And **to dust you shall return**'" (Gen 3:17-19).
- While Adam's sin was not in the plan of God, God did redeemed us out of it: "The gift [salvation] is not like that which came through the one [Adam] who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification " (Rom. 5:16).

7. The Mormon church teaches that man can marry for eternity and has the

potential to rule over a planet of his own spirit children. One of the requirements to reach this goal is what Mormons call "celestial marriage."

Today celestial marriage is simply defined as a marriage in a Mormon temple designed to last not just until death but throughout all eternity. Couples joined in such marriages are considered "sealed" to each other. Their children afterward are automatically "sealed" to them as well. This, they believe, ensures that their family will continue in heaven eternally as a complete unit. Those who become Gods will each have his own world and with his wife (wives?) procreate spirits who will be raised to maturity and go into bodies on the new world. These new people will worship those who procreated their spirits, in the same way we worship God the Father. (in [Gospel Principles](#), 1986 ed. pp. 9, 190-191 and older editions).

- Apostle [Bruce R. McConkie](#) stated: "Exalted parents are to their children as our Eternal Parents are to us. Eternal increase, a continuation of the seeds forever and ever, eternal lives -- **these comprise the eternal family of those who gain eternal life.** For them new earths are created, and thus the on-rolling purposes of the Gods of Heaven go forward from eternity to eternity" ([The Millennial Messiah](#), p.23).
- McConkie continues: "Every person **married in the temple for time and for all eternity** has sealed upon him, conditioned upon his faithfulness, all of the blessings of the ancient patriarchs, including the crowning promise and assurance of eternal increase, which means, literally, a posterity as numerous as the dust particles of the earth" ([The Millennial Messiah](#), p.264).
- Bruce McConkie wrote, "**Celestial marriage is the gate to exaltation**, and exaltation consists in the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Exaltation is...the kind of life which God lives" (Mormon Doctrine pg. 257). Celestial marriage is an absolute necessity to reach this desired goal. Its importance in the place of salvation and exaltation cannot be overestimated. "The most important things that any member of (the LDS Church) ever does in this world are: 1) To marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority; and 2) To keep the covenant made in connection with this holy and perfect order of matrimony..." ([Mormon Doctrine](#) p. 118).
- Apostle [Orson Pratt](#) stated: "Each God, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters; indeed, there will be no end to the increase of his own children: for each father and mother will be in a condition to multiply forever and ever. As soon as each God has begotten many millions of male and female spirits, and his Heavenly inheritance becomes too small, to comfortably accommodate his great family, he, in connection with his sons, organizes a new world, after a similar order to the one which we now inhabit, where he sends both the male and female spirits to inhabit tabernacles of flesh and bones" ([The Seer](#), p. 37).
- Orson Pratt continues: "Thus each God forms a world for the accommodation

of his own sons and daughters who are sent forth in their times and seasons, and generations to be born into the same. The inhabitants of each world are required to reverence, adore, and worship their own personal father who dwells in the Heaven which they formerly inhabited" ([The Seer](#), p. 37).

Of course, this Mormon view of 'eternal life' is only available to those whose marriage is sealed in a Mormon Temple, who perform Temple ordinances, etc. and eventually reach the celestial kingdom.

- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "Those who are married in the temple for all time and eternity obtain the blessing of eternal lives. I put stress on eternal lives. Eternal life is God's life... **To be married outside of the temple is for time only**" (Answers to Gospel Questions, vol. 4, p.197).

8. The Bible does not teach that man can be married for eternity; nor is earthly marriage connected with salvation.

While the Bible teaches that it is good for man to marry (Gen. 2:24, 1 Cor. 7:2,9), it is not a requirement for salvation, nor is marriage designed to last for all eternity:

- The Sadducees put a hypothetical question to Jesus about a woman married successively to seven brothers: 'In the resurrection, ...which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her?' (Mark 12:23). Jesus replied: "For when they shall rise from the dead, **they neither marry, nor are given in marriage**; but are as the angels which are in heaven" (Mark 12:25).

At face value and according to historically interpretation, Jesus appears to be saying that heaven will be much different than life as we know it on earth.

Mormon leaders have interpreted this passage quite differently:

- Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "What then is the Master Teacher affirming by saying, 'in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven'? He is not denying but limiting the prevailing concept that there will be marrying and giving in marriage in heaven. He is saying that as far as 'they' (the Sadducees) are concerned, that as far as 'they' ('the children of this world') are concerned, the family unit does not and will not continue in the resurrection. Because he does not choose to cast his pearls before swine, and because the point at issue is not marriage but resurrection anyway, Jesus does not here amplify his teaching to explain that there is marrying and giving of marriage in heaven only for those who live the

fulness of gospel law—a requirement which excludes worldly people" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1:605,606).

- David H. Yarn, Jr., a BYU professor emeritus of philosophy and religion, said, "The Lord did not say there would be no people in the married state in the resurrection but that there would be no marriages made in the resurrection" (A Sure Foundation, p. 115)

According to the Bible, in heaven Christ is married to his church collectively and perhaps individually. This seems to be why there is no marriage between men and women:

- "the marriage of the Lamb [Christ] has come and His bride [the church] has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).
- "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as **a bride adorned for her husband...Come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb****" (Rev 21:2,9).
- "He who has the bride [the church] is the bridegroom [Jesus]" (Jn. 3:29).
- "Let the bridegroom [Messiah] come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber" (Joel 2:16).

9. Mormon leaders have taught that polygamy is a righteous principle and even that its practice is necessary to attain the highest level of heaven. They justify this doctrine in part on the observation that in the Old Testament both unbelievers (i.e. Lamech, the son of Cain, and Belshazzar, the king of Babylon) and believers (i.e. Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon) were known polygamists.

While a Mormon might be excommunicated for practicing polygamy today, the command to engage in plural marriage is still included in modern editions of the [Doctrine and Covenants](#). Section 132:4 declares: "For behold, I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory."

- "the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on earth, and that **without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fullness of exaltation** in the celestial glory" (William Clayton in [Historical Record](#), p.266);
- [Brigham Young](#) stated: "**the only men who become gods, even the Son of God, are those who enter into polygamy**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 11, p.269).
- [Heber C. Kimball](#) (first counselor to Brigham Young) declared, "**You might as well deny 'Mormonism,' and turn away from it, as to oppose the**

- plurality of wives."** ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 5, p.203).
- **Brigham Young** stated, "We are told that if we would give up **polygamy-- which we know to be a doctrine revealed from heaven and it is God** and the world for it--but suppose this Church should give up this holy order of marriage, then would the devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 11:239). Later in the sermon President Young asked, 'Will the Latter-day Saints do this? No'.
 - Mormon President John Taylor accused those who opposed polygamy within the LDS Church as "apostates." He said: "Where did this commandment come from in relation to polygamy? It also came from God...I **consider them apostates**, and not interested in this Church and kingdom" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 11:221).
 - In 1869 Wilford Woodruff, Mormonism's future fourth president, taught, "**If we were to do away with polygamy...we must do away with prophets and Apostles, with revelation** and the gifts and graces of the Gospel, and finally give up our religion altogether and turn sectarians and do as the world does" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 13:165 - p.166).
 - Joseph F. Smith insisted that plural marriage was essential for LDS exaltation. "This doctrine of eternal union of husband and wife, and of plural marriage, is **one of the most important doctrines ever revealed** to man in any age of the world. Without it man would come to a full stop; **without it we never could be exalted to associate with and become god...**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 21:9).
 - Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt said, "**...if plurality of marriage is not true** or in other words, if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, then marriage for eternity is not true, and **your faith is all vain**, and all the sealing ordinances, and powers, pertaining to marriages for eternity are vain, worthless, good for nothing; for as sure as one is true the other also must be true." ([Journal of Discourses](#), 21:296).
 - Brigham Young stated: "Now **if any of you will deny the plurality of wives, and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned...**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 3:266).
 - President Wilford Woodruff signed what has come to be known as The Manifesto, or Declaration 1. The Manifesto can be found following section 138 in the Doctrine and Covenants. This document was basically a promise to the United States stating that the LDS Church would submit to the laws of the land and desist from solemnizing plural marriages.
 - Joseph F. Smith: "Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation of mankind...I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that **every man in this Church who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness**

and will not, shall be damned...I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.20, p.28-31).

This doctrine has been downplayed by recent church leaders but its stated requirement for exaltation by the LDS founders can be well [documented](#).

- Bruce McConkie: "Obviously the holy practice will commence again after the Second Coming of the Son of Man and the ushering in of the millenium." (Mormon Doctrine, p. 578).

10. The Bible teaches that plural marriage is an abomination to God.

The clearest Biblical statement on polygamy **condemns** it as an abomination:

- "He [your king] shall never again return that way [to Egypt]. Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away" (Deut. 17:16-17).
- In I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6, polygamy disqualified a man from holding church office.

Although there are examples of men who practiced polygamy in the Old Testament, it is extremely important to note that polygamy was **merely tolerated by God, but never commanded or even endorsed** by Him.

- The mere fact that in the beginning God created just Eve for the companionship of Adam points to the monogamous relationship between a man and a woman.
- This is confirmed by such passages as I Corinthians 7:2 where the apostle Paul states that "every man should have his own wife," not wives.
- Jesus condoned monogamy when He stated "they two shall be one flesh." (Matthew 19:5) .
- polygamy violates the principle of God/Christ being married to one bride (Joel 2:16; Jn. 3:29; Rev. 19:7; 21:2-9).

In the Bible, polygamy is treated the same as divorce:

- "Because of the hardness of your heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way" (Matt. 19:8).

11. The Mormon churches teaches that it has been uniquely entrusted with

administration of the priesthood. One of the unique doctrines of the Mormon church is its exclusive claim to the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. The priesthood is held by most male members 12 years and older. The Aaronic Priesthood was allegedly given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist on May 15, 1829, and before August 1830 they received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Apostles Peter, James and John.

The structure of the LDS church is as follows: The first presidency (the prophet/president and his counselors) along with the men who are under them are called the [General Authorities](#). Each gets his authority for assigned responsibilities from the president/prophet while he is living. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, twelve men, just under the Prophet, also have the same **authority** and "**keys**" as the President, but can only partially use them as authorized by the President.

- [Joseph F. Smith](#) said: "What is a key? It is the right or privilege which belongs to and comes with the Priesthood, to have communication with God" (Gospel Doctrine, page 142).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "They [the keys] can only be fully used by the apostles when there is no president, and that historically has seldom happened for long periods. With no prophet (or when Jesus died) the apostles had the keys, all the authority ([Mormon Doctrine](#), pages 591, 49).

When the priesthood was allegedly restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery it was done by Peter, James and John, three of the apostles. Mormons maintain that the Apostle John is the only apostle, of the original twelve, left on earth. According to Mormonism John was to live until the Lord came ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) section 7). Mormons also cite the gospel of John as saying John would never die:

- "Jesus said to him [Peter], 'If I want him [John] to remain until I come, what is that to you?'" (John 21:22).

Of course, John himself denies this in the next verse:

- "Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet **Jesus did not say to him that he would not die**, but only, '**If I want him to remain** until I come, what is that to you?'" (John 21:23).

The Mormons claim that, because John had all the "keys" (all authority), he could appoint and ordain new apostles and keep the Lord's church going on earth. Thus, holding the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood is their authority from God to act in his name and do his work. The LDS church maintains that Jesus gave the 12 apostles the authority to baptize but that Jesus did not give them the authority to pass on that authority to others. Thus, they teach that Christians lost their authority to baptize

until the time when the priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith.

This Mormon doctrine is closely related to their teaching that the Christian church went through a [great apostasy](#) following the death of the original apostles (except John).

- "Apostasy was universal...And this **darkness still prevails** except among those who have come to a knowledge of the restored gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol 3, p.265).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Thus the signs of the times include the **prevailing apostate darkness in the sects of Christendom** and in the religious world in general" (The Millennial Messiah, p.403); "a perverted Christianity holds sway among the so-called Christians of apostate Christendom" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.132); "virtually all the **millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves** before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.269);

12. The Bible says that Jesus Christ has superceded all Old Testament priesthoods.

The authority claimed by the Mormon Church through an "Aaronic Priesthood," cannot be valid since Jesus abolished this priesthood when He took its place (Hebrews 7:11-19, 8:6-13). Likewise, the "Melchizedek Priesthood" never existed as any operative "priesthood", even in Old Testament times. No priestly succession is mentioned. Jesus is our only High Priest and He alone holds this permanently (Hebrews 7:15-28, 9:11-15).

Why is the idea of priests and priesthood important?

- The inevitable result of this Mormon teaching is that the person and work of Jesus Christ is minimized and given second place to the teaching that man himself will become a God. In Mormon doctrine, holding the office of the Melchizedek priesthood is essential to eternal progression so that without it celestial exaltation will not be achieved.
- Each occupant of the First Presidency, from Joseph Smith onward, has been the highest occupant of the Melchizedek priesthood. This contradicts the teaching of Hebrews chapters 7-9 and lessens the importance and uniqueness of Jesus.

Here is what the Bible says about the uniqueness of Jesus' priesthood:

- In these last days God speaks through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).
- Jesus is our only High Priest (Hebrews 7:15-28).
- He alone holds this permanently and no one else (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Jesus was not merely another in succession of priests, but His priesthood was unique. There had not been one like it before, and there will not be one like it again. His priesthood is the climax and culmination of priesthood before God.

Why was Jesus' priesthood unique? According to the Bible:

- Jesus' priesthood is superior due to a **better calling**. Other priests were chosen, but Jesus was called with an oath (Heb. 5:5; 7:21). God, who could swear by no greater than Himself, proclaimed Jesus to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- Jesus' priesthood is superior due to a **better covenant** (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:15). God found fault with the old covenant in that it could not accomplish the salvation of Israel. So He made a new covenant, and Jesus is the mediator of that covenant (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5-6).
- Jesus' priesthood is superior due to a **better sacrifice** (Heb. 9:11ff). Those who served in the Levitical priesthood offered sacrifices annually according to commandment. Those sacrifices did not serve to put away sin. Jesus, however, by one sacrifice, forever put away sin, and now sits at God the Father's right hand (Heb. 9:24ff; 10:12).
- Jesus' priesthood is unique due to an **indestructible life** (Heb.7:16). Many men over several centuries served in the Levitical priesthood, yet none of them could continue because of death (Heb. 7:23-25).

Furthermore, the Bible states that **all Christians are now priests**:

- "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9).
- "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5).

The believer-as-a-priest concept is important because in other religions and in many cults **a priest serves as an essential intermediary between man and God**. A fundamental uniqueness of Christianity is that Jesus abolished this:

- "For there is one God and **one mediator** also between God and man, the Man **Christ Jesus**" (1 Tim.2:5).
- "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same **sacrifices, which can never take away sins**" (Heb 10:11), but "He [Jesus], having offered **one sacrifice for sins for all time**" (Heb. 10:12) "has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14) so that "There is

no longer any offering for sin" (Heb. 10:18).

- Therefore, the Bible says that "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us through His Son" (Heb. 1:1).

13. Mormons teach that all men are children of God, hence there is a general salvation.

"All men and women are...literally sons and daughters of Deity" ([Gospel Principles](#), p. 11).

This doctrine is related to other Mormon teachings that claim:

- 'salvation' is universal,
- the [dead outside of Christ can get to heaven](#),
- there is [no eternal hell](#).

14. The Bible teaches that one becomes a child of God only through faith in Christ Jesus.

- "But **as many as received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:12).
- "For you [the Christians in Galatia to whom Paul is writing] are all **sons of God through faith** in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

The Mormon teaching that all men are children of God contradicts the clear teaching of the Bible that all men are inherently sinful and in need of redemption:

- "**All of us** like sheep have gone astray, **each of us** has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him" (Is. 53:6).
- "as it is written, there is **none** righteous, no **not one**" (Rom. 3:10).
- "You were **dead** in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Gal. 2:1-2).
- We "were by **nature** children of wrath, even as the rest" (Gal. 2:3).
- Outside of Christ, all are "darkened in their understanding, **excluded from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18).

- "Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. **You belong to your father, the devil**, and you want to carry out your father's desire'" (John 8:42-44).
- "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And I will declare to them, '**I never knew you**; depart from Me'" (Matt. 7:21-23).

If all men are by nature children of God as Mormon teaching suggests, then why, according to the Bible, must everyone who comes to Christ be transformed by God into a new creation with a new heart?

- "if any man is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away, behold **new things have come**" (2 Cor. 5:17).
- "Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the **new self who is being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:10).
- "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the **new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth" (Eph. 4:23-24).
- "However, you are **not in the flesh** but in the Spirit, if indeed the **Spirit of God dwells in you**" (Rom. 8:9).
- "It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**" (Gal. 2:20).
- "I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you, and I will remove the heart of stone...and I will put **My Spirit** within you and **cause you to walk in My statutes**" (Ezekiel. 36:26-27).

In the Bible, becoming a child of God is intimately linked with **placing our total trust in Him for salvation**. This is not something that happens to everyone but is clearly conditional:

- "Through His name **every one who believes in Him** has received forgiveness of sins " (Acts 10:43).
- "**He who hears my word and believes Him who sent Me** has eternal life and does not come into judgement" (Jn. 5:24).
- "**Every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him**, may have eternal life, and I myself will raise him up on the last day" (Jn. 6:40).
- "**As many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe on His name" (Jn. 1:12).

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Mormon Literature & Notable Mormon Leaders

Mormon Scripture (the "Standard Works"):

- **Book of Mormon:** Mormons claim their book to be a record written on golden plates by prophets of a race who lived in the Americas for about 1,000 years. Joseph Smith said he found these plates in 1823 near Palmyra, NY and executed an exact and inerrant translation of them with the help of an angel, two friends and special instruments. The ancient race was descended from two groups of Hebrews, the Nephites and the Lamanites, who traveled to the New World from Palestine around 600 B.C. and built a great civilization. Another people, the Jaredites, who had arrived in the Americas much earlier, exterminated the Nephites around A.D. 421. The Lamanites then became the principal ancestors of the American Indians. The indigenous people discovered by Columbus are cousins of that race, cursed with dark skin for having rejected God. A major claim of the Book of Mormon is that Christ appeared in the New World shortly after His resurrection and that His second coming will be preceded by a massive conversion of the American Indians to Christ, who will then exterminate the gentiles that do not accept it. After that, the believing Indians and Mormons will build the New Jerusalem (in Independence, Missouri), where Christ will return to live¹⁴. **The Mormon Church claims this book is "another testament of Jesus Christ"** that confirms the Biblical dictate to establish every fact by the mouth of two or three witnesses.
- **The Pearl of Great Price:** This claims to be a "selection of choice materials touching many significant aspects of the faith and doctrine" of the LDS Church. It became a standard work of the church [i.e. scripture] by action of the First Presidency in 1880, and contains:
 - The Books of Moses and Matthew - Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis and Matthew
 - The Book of Abraham - Joseph Smith's translation of Egyptian papyri purportedly written by Abraham
 - Joseph Smith-History - Joseph Smith's description of his initial revelation and the formation of the LDS church
 - The Articles of Faith - A concise statement of some central tenants of Mormonism
- **Doctrine & Covenants** - A collection of supposedly "divine revelations and

inspired declarations" received mostly through Joseph Smith. Much Mormon Doctrine is derived from this work.

- **The Bible** - Mormons accept the Bible as authoritative scripture, with the caveat "as far as it is translated correctly". Mormon confidence in the Bible is less than that of the three works above due to Joseph Smith's [incorrect contention](#) that the Biblical canon is incomplete and inaccurate due to errors in translation and transcription. This has been disproven by many scholars.

Mormon Doctrine:

- **Mormon Doctrine** - written by Mormon Apostle and apologist Bruce McConkie, and published in 1966; this is the standard LDS guide to church doctrine, found in nearly every active Mormon household.
- **Doctrines of Salvation** -written by Joseph Fielding Smith
- **A Study of the Articles of Faith** - Principle Doctrines of the LDS church discussed by J.E. Talmage, an LDS apostle. Published by Deseret Book Co. (an official LDS publisher), 1st edition in 1899.
- **Gospel Principles** - a book published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and used to teach new members the doctrines of their church. Substantial differences exist between the 1978 and 1986 editions, as doctrines are revised and "toned down".
- **Gospel Through the Ages** - Milton R. Hunter. Published by Deseret Book Co., 1945.
- **The Way to Perfection** - Joseph Fielding Smith
- **The Miracle of Forgiveness** - Spencer W. Kimball

Transcribed Sermons of Early LDS Church Leaders:

- **Journal of Discourses** - Sermons delivered by LDS church authorities from Nov. 1, 1853 to May 17, 1886 (26 vols., weekly or semi-weekly). Some leaders proclaimed their sermons to be [scripture](#).
- **Times and Seasons** - Claims to contains "a compendium of intelligence pertaining to the upbuilding of the kingdom of God with useful information in regard to doctrine of the LDS church". Edited by Joseph Smith and others, 1839-1854, 6 vols., monthly.
- **The Seer** - Edited by Orson Pratt, 1853-1854, 2 vols, monthly.
- **Lectures on Faith** - Delivered to the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, OH, 1854-1855. Published by Deseret Book Co., 1985.

LDS Church History:

- **History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** - Documents of the early church (by Joseph Smith, 7 vols. ed. by B.H. Roberts, 2nd ed., The

Deseret Book Co., Salt Lake City, 1978). Note: some of these (vol. 1, chp. 1-5; vol. 2, p.235-236, 348-351; vol.4, p.535-542) were later incorporated into the Pearl of Great Price and therefore designated as LDS "scripture".

- **Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith** (Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, 1938)
- **A Comprehensive History of the Church** - by B.H. Roberts, Church Historian (1857-1933), Deseret Book Co., 1930.
- **History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** - by B.H. Roberts, 7 vols., 1902.
- **Historical Record** - by Andrew Jensen
- **Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball** - collection of teachings by the 12th LDS President.

Miscellaneous LDS Publications:

- **The Ensign** - current and official LDS church magazine
- **Millennial Star** - Periodical published by the LDS church in Great Britain, 1840-1852, monthly, semi-monthly or weekly.
- **Deseret News** - Official LDS church periodical from 1850-1898, 57 vols, 1st newspaper in Utah.
- **Tribune** - LDS church periodical
- **Improvement Era** - current and official LDS church magazine
- **Church News** - LDS church periodical
- **Sunstone** - LDS church periodical
- **What Mormons Think of Christ** - LDS tract, Desert News Press.
- **Come Unto Christ** - by Ezra Taft Benson
- **Encyclopedia of Mormonism** - a 1992 work published under the supervision of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the LDS church

Notable Mormon Leaders

Joseph Smith (1805-1844): Founder of the LDS Church, 1st President and Prophet, led church members to Nauvoo, IL, where he was killed while imprisoned.

Brigham Young: 2nd LDS President and Prophet, led church members to Salt Lake City, Utah.

John Taylor - 3rd LDS Prophet and President

Wilford Woodruff - 4th LDS Prophet and President (1869)

William Clayton - 5th LDS Prophet and President

Joseph Fielding Smith - (1876-1972) Sixth LDS President Joseph F. Smith

Spencer W. Kimball - 12th LDS President

Ezra Taft Benson - 13th LDS President Ezra Taft Benson

Gordon Hinkley - current LDS Prophet and President (7/99)

Orson Pratt (1811-1881) - LDS Apostle and contemporary of Brigham Young and Joseph Smith

Bruce McConkie (1915-1985) - Mormon 'apostle' and key apologist of the 1950s-80s. His book 'Mormon Doctrine' can be found in almost every Mormon household and is the standard reference used by Mormons to talk about church doctrine.

James E. Talmage - Apostle of the LDS church and author of a long and complete description of Smith's Articles of Faith in 'A Study of the Articles of Faith', in 1899. The "Articles of Faith" contain a concise statement of 12 'official' central tenants of Mormonism. While there are several articles with which most knowledgeable Christians would disagree, many controversial doctrines are not covered in the 12 articles.

George Q. Cannon - Counselor to presidents Young, Taylor, Woodruff and Snow, former member of the First Presidency

Heber C. Kimball - First Counselor to Brigham Young

Sidney Rigdon - (1793-1876): Converted Baptist preacher who played a key role in the birth of Mormonism by serving as Joseph Smith's chief advisor. He ultimately lost faith in Joseph Smith and was excommunicated after accusing Smith of soliciting his daughter. He consistently took a strong anti-polygamy stance despite 'revelations' to Joseph Smith promoting polygamy that later appeared in the Doctrine and Covenants.

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What Mormons Think of the Bible

Official Mormon Statements about the Bible:

The Mormon church teaches that the Bible has been corrupted and does not contain the fullness of the gospel. This is reflected in one of their Articles of Faith which states: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God **as far as it is translated correctly**" ([Pearl of Great Price](#)).

- Joseph Smith stated: "it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been **taken from the Bible, or lost** before it was compiled" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.10); "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 327).
- When: "the book [Bible] proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew...it contained the fullness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record" (1 Nephi 13:24), but afterwards "thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church...after **the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church**, that there are **many plain and precious things taken away from the book**, which is the book of the Lamb of God. And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles" ([Book of Mormon](#), 1 Nephi 13:26,28). See also [Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.3, p.190-191.
- "many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible...Wherefore because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 29:3,10).
- When his "revelation" about Adam being God was disputed, Brigham Young stated: "You believe Adam was made of the dust of this earth. This I do not believe...I have publicly declared that **I do not believe that portion of the Bible as the Christian world do. I never did, and I never want to**. What is the reason I do not? Because I have come to understanding, and banished from my mind all the baby stories my mother taught me when I was a child" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.2, p.6).
- Orson Pratt's lack of confidence in the Bible is obvious: "...and who, in his

right mind, could for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? **No one can tell whether even one verse of either the Old or New Testament conveys the ideas of the original author**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p. 28).

- Apostle Bruce McConkie: "Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors, many plain and precious things were deleted, in consequence of which error and falsehood poured into the churches. **One of the great heresies of modern Christendom is the unfounded assumption that the Bible contains all of the inspired teachings** now extant among men" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), pp. 82,83).
- McConkie continues: The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity - manuscripts which passed through the hands of **uninspired** men who changed many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. Deletions were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been lost. As a consequence, **those who rely upon it [the Bible] alone stumble and are confused...** ([The Ensign](#), December 1985, p 55).
- Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen accused manuscript copyists of deliberately tampering with the Bible: "Many insertions were made, some of them slanted for selfish purposes, while at times **deliberate falsifications and fabrications were perpetrated**" ([As Translated Correctly](#), p.4).

Comparisons made by Mormon Leaders between the Bible and Book of Mormon. In contrast to the Bible, Mormons believe the Book of Mormon is perfect because it was translated perfectly (miraculously) as reflected in the second half of the same Article of Faith: "...we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God [but without any qualifications as to translation accuracy]" ([Pearl of Great Price](#)).

- President Ezra Taft Benson stated: "Unlike the Bible, which passed through generations of copyists, translators, and corrupt religionists who tampered with the text, the Book of Mormon came **from writer to reader in just one inspired step** of translation" ("The Keystone of Our Religion", [The Ensign](#), January 1992, page 5).
- Joseph Smith claimed: "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was **more correct than any book on earth**, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding its precepts, **than by any other book**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.194).
- An official and widely read LDS publication reads: "Men can get nearer to the Lord, can have more of the spirit of conversion and conformity in their hearts...can gain a **better understanding of the doctrines of salvation through the Book of Mormon than they can through the Bible...**there will

be more people saved in the kingdom of God - ten thousand times over - because of the Book of Mormon than there will be because of the Bible" ([The Ensign](#), November 1984, p. 7).

- A letter from the First Presidency (Presidents Benson, Hinckley, and Monson) to all members of the Church states: "The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical passage is not by comparing different texts, but by **comparison with the Book of Mormon and modern-day revelations**". ([Church News](#), June 20, 1992, page 3, letter dated May 22, 1992).

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References: Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about God

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section, "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. The Mormon church teaches that "God is only one of many gods", because human beings can progress to become gods and goddesses in the celestial kingdom (see: [Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#) , pp.28, 51-53).

- Mormon founder [Joseph Smith](#) describes the creation of the earth: "And they (the **Gods**) said, 'Let there be light'...And the **Gods** pronounced the dry land...And the **Gods** organized the earth...And the **Gods** planted a garden in Eden" ([Pearl of Great Price, Abraham](#) 4:3,10,25; 5:8). A reference to a plurality of 'Gods' occurs at least **43 times** in the book of [Abraham](#).
- According to [Joseph Smith](#): "The doctrine of a **plurality of Gods** is prominent in the Bible. The heads of the **Gods** appointed our God for us...you have got to learn how to be **Gods** yourselves...the same as all **Gods** have done before you" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.370-372, 346).
- Mormon Apostle and leading apologist [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Three separate personages---Father, Son, and Holy Ghost---comprise the Godhead...As **each of these persons is a God**, it is evident from this standpoint alone, that a **plurality of Gods** exists. To us...**these three are the only Gods** we worship" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.576-577).
- Mormon Apostle [Orson Pratt](#) wrote "there are **more gods** than there are particles of matter" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.2, p.345).
- Mormon Prophet [Brigham Young](#) wrote: "How many **Gods** there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not **Gods**" ([Journal of Discourses](#) v.7, p.333).

2. The Bible consistently declares that there now is, always has been, and will ever be only ONE God:

- "the Lord, He is God; there is **no other besides Him**" (Deut. 4:35).
- " I am the first, I am also the last and there is **no God besides Me**" (Is. 44:6, 48:12, 45:14,21-22).
- "there is **but one God**, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him" (1 Cor. 6:6).
- "I am God and there is **no other**; I am God and there is **no one like me**" (Is.

46:9).

- "...**before me there was no God** formed, and there **will be none after me!**" (Is. 43:10).
- "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since he could swear by **no one greater**, He swore by Himself" (Heb. 6:13).
- "Thou **alone art the LORD**; thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it" (Neh. 9:6).
- there are **many** additional verses: including Isaiah chp. 45-49, 1 Tim. 1:17.

In some biblical passages, God does refer to Himself in the plural (Gen. 1:26, Is. 41:22-23), which orthodox Christians believe is consistent with the biblical concept of the [Trinity](#).

The Bible occasionally refers to 'gods', in two other contexts:

- In the context of denouncing pagan polytheism: "For even though there are **so-called gods** whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, **yet for us there is but one God**" (2 Cor. 8:5-6). See also: 2 Chron. 2: 5-6 and Is. 41:23. These passages are often misconstrued by Mormon missionaries to argue that the Bible is only talking about the God of this planet and not 'gods' of other worlds. However, the Bible makes no reference whatsoever to other actual 'gods' anywhere in the universe.
- The Bible uses the word "Elohim" in a figurative way to refer to men carrying out a God-like function or holding God-like authority over others (Ex. 21:6; 22:8,9; Ps. 82:6). For example: "He [Aaron] shall be as a mouth for you, and you [Moses] **shall be as God** to him" (Ex. 4:16).

3. Mormon theology contends that Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct Gods. This teaching is related to the testimony of Joseph Smith, who in [one version](#) of his first vision, stated that he saw two separate personages (the Father and the Son) in the form of men:

- "When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other 'This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!'" ([Joseph Smith History](#) 1:17).

Other Mormon writers expound on the significance of this description:

- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "There are **three Gods**...separate in personality, united in purpose, in plan, and in all attributes of perfection" ([Mormon](#)

[Doctrine](#), p.270).

- [James Talmage](#) states: "This [the Trinity] **cannot rationally be construed to mean** that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one in substance and person" ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.40)
- [Heber C. Kimball](#) stated: "The Holy Ghost is a **man**; he is **one of the sons** of our Father and our God" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.5, p.179).

4. The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is an established tenant of orthodox Christianity, having been stated in most of the recognized creeds. Based on the reconciliation of many different scriptures, all of which must be true simultaneously, God is described as the Trinity, one God with three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Although not succinctly stated in a single scripture text, this concept of God's nature is consistent with the entirety of the Bible. It asserts that three divine persons share the same essence (are one and the same God). They are all coequal, coeternal, and of the same nature. A few of the many relevant passages are given below:

Regarding God the Father, the Bible emphatically states:

- "The Lord is our God, the Lord is **one!**" (Deut. 6:4, Mark 12:29).
- " I am the first, I am also the last and there is **no God besides Me**" (Is. 44:6, 48:12, 45:14,21-22).
- "the Lord, He is God; there is **no other besides Him**" (Deut. 4:35).

Yet, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also identified with, and act as, God:

- "In Him [Jesus] all the **fulness of Deity** dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).
- "He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the **exact representation of His nature**" (Heb. 1:3).
- "But of the **Son** He [God] says, 'Thy Throne **O God** is forever and ever'" (Heb. 1:8).
- "Thomas answered [to Jesus] 'My Lord and **My God**'" (John 20:28).
- Jesus claimed: "I and the Father are **one**", meaning **in essence** (based on the Greek construction). Some Mormons would argue this just means 'one in purpose', but the Jews clearly understood Jesus' statement as blasphemy because they "took up stones again to stone Him" (Jn. 10:30-31).
- Jesus also claimed: "Before Abraham was born, **I AM**" (Jn. 8:58), a restatement of the name God used for himself to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**" (Ex. 3:14); the Jews understood this, too, as blasphemy, and tried to stone Jesus again (Jn. 8:59).
- "**God is spirit** and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"

(Jn. 4:24).

- "Now the **Lord is the Spirit**" (2 Cor. 3:17).
- "The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14); all three members of the Trinity are mentioned together in this verse.

For more detailed explanations, the reader is referred to published articles by [Grider](#) and [Martin](#), the C.A.R.M. [webpage](#), and my section on [Jesus](#).

5. The Mormon church teaches that "God was once a man who achieved godhood". This doctrine, "**eternal progression**" is central to Mormonism, as stated in one of their frequently-used quotes:

- "**As man is, God once was: as God is, man may be**" (Lorenzo Snow, [Millennial Star](#), vol.54).

In Mormon theology, those who achieve godhood will have spirit children who will worship and pray to them just as we worship and pray to God the Father ([Gospel Principles](#), p.290). A pictorial diagram of the Mormon view of eternal progression can be found [here](#). This is not an isolated teaching: it has been **taught by a large number of prominent LDS leaders, including its founders**:

- [Joseph Smith](#) taught: "I will prove that the world is wrong, by showing what God is...**God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man**, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret...I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea**, and take away the veil, so that you may see" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.345);
- [Joseph Smith](#) continues: "God himself...is a **man** like unto one of yourselves...God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth...You have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**" ([Times and Seasons](#), vol.5, pp.613-614); "Here then is eternal life---to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves...the same as all Gods have done before you...To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.346-347).
- [Brigham Young](#) taught: "**He [God] ...was once a man** in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted being...It appears ridiculous to the world, under their darkened and erroneous traditions, that **God was once been a finite being**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.7, p.333); "The Lord created you and me

- for the purpose of **becoming Gods like himself**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.3, p.93).
- Here is [Joseph Smith's](#) revelation about Mormons attaining to the [celestial kingdom](#): "These are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized...who have received of his fullness, and of his glory...**they are gods**" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 51-58).
 - [James Talmage](#) explains: "We believe in a God who **is Himself progressive**...whose perfection consists in eternal **advancement**...a Being who has **attained** His exalted state"([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.430, 1952).
 - [Heber C. Kimbal](#) wrote: "We shall go back to **our Father and God, who is connected with one** who is still farther back; and this Father is connected with one still farther back, and so on" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.5, p.19); "our God is a **natural man**...where did he get his knowledge from? From **his father**, just as we get our knowledge from our earthly parents" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.8, p.211).
 - [Orson Pratt](#) wrote: "The **Gods** who dwell in heaven...were once in a **fallen state**...they were exalted also, **from fallen men** to celestial Gods" ([The Seer](#), p.23); "**our Father in Heaven was begotten** on a previous heavenly world by His Father; **He was begotten by a still more ancient Father**; and so on from generation to generation, from one heavenly world to another" ([The Seer](#), p.132).
 - [Milton R. Hunter](#) wrote: "God the Eternal Father was **once a mortal man** who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He **became** a God" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.104);"there was a time when the Deity **was much less powerful** than He is today...He **grew** in experience and continued to **grow** until He **attained** the status of Godhood. In other words, He became a God by absolute obedience..." ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.114-115).
 - [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "God himself, the Father of us all, is a glorious, exalted, immortal, resurrected **man**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.642-643); "God...is a personal Being, a holy and **exalted man**...an anthropomorphic entity" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.250); "as the **Prophet** [Joseph Smith] also **taught**, **'there is a God above the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ'" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.322, 1966).
 - [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) stated: "**God is an exalted man**...our Father in Heaven at one time passed through a life and death and is an **exalted man**...The **Prophet** [Joseph Smith] **taught that our Father had a Father** and so on...promises are made to us that we may become like him" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.10-12).

Mormon leaders have continued to teach this doctrine, as is evident by a few quotes

from recent President and Prophet Spencer W. Kimball in official LDS periodicals:

- "Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose that **225,000 of you may become gods**" (from a speech published in [The Ensign](#), November 1975, 1980).
- "In each of us is the potentiality to **become a God**" ([Tribune](#), Oct. 7, 1974).
- "Man can transform himself, but he has in him the seeds of Godhood that can grow. He can **lift himself by his very bootstraps**" ([Tribune](#), Sept. 18, 1974).
- "In spite of the opposition of the sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the [LDS] Church proclaims the eternal truth: 'As man is God once was; as God is, man may be'" (James Talmage in *The Articles of Faith*, a widely circulated LDS doctrinal book).

Current President and Prophet Gordon Hinkley admits, albeit reluctantly, in recent interviews to believing this doctrine (San Francisco Chronicle, Sunday, 4/13/97, page 3/Z13; Time magazine August 4, 1997):

- "President Gordon Hinckley says the concept of God having been a man is not stressed any longer, but he [Hinckley] **does believe that human beings can become gods in the afterlife**" (Richard Ostling, interviewer for Time magazine).
- Hinckley states: "Well, they [men] can achieve to a godly status, yes, of course they can, **eternal progression**. We believe in the progression of the human soul. Ours is a forward-looking religion. It's an upward-looking religion" (Public Broadcasting System; transcript dated July 18, 1997).

Attempts to tone down the importance of this doctrine are reflected in changes made to the recent edition of the LDS book [Gospel Principles](#), which is used to teach new members the doctrines of their church. Here is one example:

- The 1978 edition reads: "We can become **Gods** like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation" ([Gospel Principles](#), p.290, 1978);
- but the 1997 edition reads: "We can become **like** our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation" ([Gospel Principles](#), p.302, 1997).

6. The Bible teaches that God is unchangeable and that He has eternally existed as God:

- "I am God and **not man**, the Holy One" (Hosea 11:8)
- "God is **not a man** that He should lie" (Num. 23:19)
- "Even from **everlasting to everlasting**, Thou art God" (Ps. 90:2)

- "Thou art from **everlasting**" (Ps. 93:2)
- "Thou art the **same**" (Ps. 102:27)
- "For I, the Lord, **do not change**" (Mal. 3:6)
- See also: Is. 43:10; Is. 44:6, 8; Is. 48:11.

Mormons sometimes cite passages that speak of God 'repenting' (Gen. 6:6, Ex. 32:14, 1 Sam. 15:11,35) as evidence that He changes, yet **none of the passages speak of a change in God's nature**, only in an **apparent** change in His action.

7. In Mormon theology, "God has flesh and bones" and is therefore limited in capacity. According to Mormon authors:

- "God is an organized being **just as we** are who are now in the **flesh**" ([Gospel Doctrine](#), p.64).
- "The Father has a **body of flesh and bones** as tangible as man's ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 130:22).
- "God is **not omnipresent**...cannot be physically present in more than one place at a time"; "If God possesses a form, that form is of necessity of definite proportions, and therefore of **limited extension and space**. It is **impossible for Him** to occupy at one time more than one space of such limits" (Talmage, [A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.43,48).
- [Brigham Young](#) declared: "Some would have us believe that God is present everywhere. **It is not so**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.6, p.345).
- [Carfred Broderick](#) writes: "God is a procreating personage of **flesh and bone**" ([Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought](#), Autumn, 1967, p.100-101).

8. God, as described in the Bible is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. The Bible clearly states that God is **Spirit** and therefore **invisible**:

- "**God is Spirit** and those that worship Him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).
- "A spirit does **not have flesh and bones**" (Lk. 24:39).
- "**No man has seen God** at any time" (Jn 1:18).
- Jesus said: "**No man has seen the Father**, except the One who is from God" (Jn. 4:46).
- "And He [Jesus] is the image of the **invisible** God" (Col. 1:15).
- "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only God" (1 Tim. 1:17).
- "For he [Moses] endured, as seeing Him [God] who is **unseen**" (Heb. 11:27).
- "who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom

no man has seen or can see" (1 Tim. 6:16).

If God had a body, He would be limited by time and space (Beckwith), which the Bible says He is not:

- God is Omnipotent: "I [God] will **do whatever** I choose" (Is. 46:10); "You [God] are **all-powerful**, what you can conceive, you can perform" (Jb. 42:2); "To you [God] **nothing is impossible**" (Jer. 32:17); "For God **everything is possible**" (Matt. 19:26).
- God is Omniscient, because He has total knowledge of the past, present and future: "Our Lord is great, all-powerful, of **infinite understanding**" (Ps. 147:5); "He sees to the ends of the earth, and **observes all** that lies under heaven (Jb. 28:24); "From the beginning I [God] **foretold the future and predicted beforehand** what is to be" (Is. 46:10).
- God is Omnipresent: "Yahweh is indeed in heaven above as in earth beneath" (Deut. 4:39); "the heavens cannot **contain you** [God]" (1 Kings 8:27); "Yet...he [God] is **not far from any of us**, since it is in him that we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:24-28).
- God is Sustainer of the Universe: "you [God] made all the universe and it was only by your will that everything was made and exists" (Rev. 4:11); "it is He who gives everything, including life and breath, to everyone" (Acts 17:25); "for in Him all things were created in heaven and on earth...before anything was created **He existed, and He holds all things together**" (Col. 1:16-7).

While Mormons probably will not argue with the above verses, their view that God has flesh and bones precludes His possession of the other characteristics. To try to prove God's corporeality, Mormons often cite passages such as "the man Yahweh knew **face to face**" (Deut. 34:10); "Yahweh said...'I will...shield you with my **hand**...you shall see the **back** of me, but my **face** is not to be seen'" (Ex. 33:22-23). There are several serious flaws with this approach:

- These anthropomorphic metaphors are used by Biblical writers (in this case, Moses) to describe particular actions of God in human terms, and need to be interpreted using standard hermeneutical principles; e.g., they must be interpreted in accord with the rest of scripture.
- These passages refer to the God of the Old Testament, which Mormons teach is the pre-incarnant Jesus, **before he became corporeal**; they cannot logically use them to support their argument that the God of the Old Testament had flesh and bones (Beckwith).
- Such literal interpretations must also lead to the ridiculous conclusion that God has **feathers and wings** (Ps. 91:4) and is **on fire** (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24), that He is a **door** (Jn. 10:9), a **fountain** (Ps. 91:4), a **loaf of bread** (Jn. 6:35,51), and a **vine** (Jn. 15:1-5), etc. This sort of reasoning ignores the literary style and intent of the author.

Mormons might also argue: 'What about the statements in Genesis (1:27, 9:6) that man was made in the image of God. Doesn't that mean God is like man?' No, these verses must be interpreted in context and in accord with the entirety of scripture, where very clear statements are made about God's spirit nature (e.g. Jn. 4:24, see above). For example, the Genesis phrase 'In the image of God' must obviously refer to man's intellectual capability, self-awareness, speech, spiritual nature, God-awareness, etc. ([McElveen](#)). For example, the Bible also states that "God is not a man" in the sense that "he cannot lie" (Num. 23:19).

9. The Mormon church teaches that we have a Heavenly Mother as well as a Heavenly Father.

- [Brigham Young](#) stated: "Brother [Kimball](#) quoted a saying of [Joseph the Prophet](#), that he would not worship a God who had not a father; and I do not know that he would if he had not a **mother**; the one would be as absurd as the other" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.9, p.286).
- Apostle [Orson Pratt](#) stated: "But if we have a heavenly **Mother** as well as a heavenly Father, is it not right that we should worship the **Mother** of our spirits as well as the Father? No...it is lawful for the children to worship the King of Heaven, but not the '**Queen** of heaven'" ([The Seer](#), p.159).
- Apostle [Bruce McConkie](#) writes: "Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an **eternal mother**. An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a **woman** of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a **mother...This doctrine that there is a mother in heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church...when...they said..'that all men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother'" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.516, 1966).**
- [Milton R. Hunter](#) (First Council of the Presidency) states: "The stupendous truth of the existence of a **Heavenly Mother**, as well as a Heavenly Father, became established facts in Mormon theology" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.98, 1958).
- Linda Wilcox reports recent discussion of this subject in the LDS Church: "Lately there has been increased discussion and speculation about how we can or do relate to our **Heavenly Mother** (or possibly mothers?). Orson Pratt taught that we are not to worship the mother of our spirits although we worship the father...Rodger Clawson, however, pointed out that men as well as women and children crave a **Mother in Heaven** to worship and 'yearn to adore her'. He said, 'It doesn't take from our worship of the Eternal Father, to

adore our **Eternal Mother**... Currently, there is no encouragement on the part of the Mormon church leaders to pray to a **Heavenly Mother**, and in fact even active discouragement...Still, there has been recently a more evident desire to reach out to **Mother in Heaven** in some way..." (Sunstone, vol. 5, no.5, p.13-14).

10. The Bible simply makes **no reference whatsoever** to a Heavenly Mother nor to a wife for God.

11. Mormon leaders, **Brigham Young in particular, have taught that Adam was God.** Although this doctrine has been officially repudiated by the LDS church in recent times, it is well documented that it was consistently and repeatedly taught by Brigham Young and other church leaders. This serves to undermine their claims to authority as true prophets and spokesmen for God.

- Brigham Young proclaimed: "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. **He helped to make and organize this world.** He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days, about whom holy men have written and spoken---**He is our father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 1, p.50-51, a sermon given on April 9, 1852).
- Brigham Young stated: "Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh **by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 1, p.50-51).

Brigham Young also said that when his sermons were corrected, they were scripture ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 13, p.95). The one above was printed one year later in the Church's [Millennial Star](#) paper and in the [Journal of Discourses](#) where Brigham Young had to approve it. However, he did not correct or amend it over the ensuing 25 years before his death in 1877. Much to the contrary, on June 18, 1873 the [Deseret News](#) printed another of his sermons in which he stated:

- "How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I have revealed to them, and which God revealed to me...namely that **Adam is our Father and God**...Our Father Adam is the man who stands at the gate and **holds the keys to everlasting life and salvation** to all his children who have or ever will come upon the earth"

(Brigham Young, [Deseret News](#), June 18, 1873).

President Young felt strongly about criticism he received from others in the LDS Church, notably [Orson Pratt](#), about this doctrine: "Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, **for they will prove their salvation or damnation**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.1, p.50-51).

- F.D. Richards, a prominent Mormon confirms this was doctrine: "Concerning the doctrine that Adam is our Father and God...the prophet and Apostle **Brigham has declared it, and that is the word of the Lord**" ([Millennial Star](#), August 26, 1854, vol.16, p.534).
- Hosea Stout confirms this: "Another meeting this evening. **President B. Young taught that Adam was the Father of Jesus and the Only God to us**" (Diary of Hosea Stout, April 9, 1852, vol. 2, p.435).
- Other leaders taught it, including George Q. Cannon: "Jesus Christ is Jehovah...**Adam is his Father and our God**" (Diary of Abraham H. Cannon, June 23, 1889, vol.11, p.39).
- Mormon A.F. McDonald commented: "The doctrine preached by [President] Young for a few years back wherein **he says that Adam is our God**---the God we worship--- **most of the people believe it**...if the President makes a statement it is not our prerogative to dispute it...when I first heard the **doctrine** of Adam being our Father and God, I was favorably impressed---enjoyed and **hailed it as a new Revelation**" (Minutes of the School of Prophets, Provo, UT, 1868-1871, p.38-39).
- Mormon Edward W. Tullidge wrote: "**Adam is our Father and God**. He is the God of the Earth. **So says Brigham Young**" and "When **Brigham Young proclaimed to the nations that Adam was our Father and God**, and Eve, his partner, the Mother of a world---both in a mortal and celestial sense---**he made the most important revelation** ever oracled to the race since the days of Adam himself" (The Women of Mormondom, p.79,179,196-197, 1877).
- John Nuttall records: "Prest **Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said...Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior)** who is the heir of the family is Father Adam's first begotten in the spirit world" (Wednesday Feb. 7, 1877, Journal of John Nuttall, vol.1, p.18-21).

These are only a few of the evidences that [Brigham Young](#) taught the Adam-God doctrine. Additional documentation can be found in the [Journal of Discourses](#) (vol.5, p.331-332) and in articles of the [Millennial Star](#) (vol.15, p.801; vol.16, p.482,530,534; vol.17, p.195) and [Deseret News](#) (June 14, 1873).

Most recent Mormon leaders deny that Brigham Young taught this doctrine, claim it was erroneously transcribed, or denounce it as false. However, because Young's

statements can be extremely well documented, this undermines the credibility of one or both parties ^{12,13}.

- Spencer W. Kimball stated: "We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are **alleged to have been taught** by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the **Adam-God theory**. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of **false doctrine**" ([Church News](#), October 9, 1976).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) said this about Brigham Young's statements: "in all probability, the sermon was **erroneously transcribed**" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.96).
- Hugh Brown (a member of the First Presidency) stated: "The **Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine** of the Church, and the reports on that subject as published in the Journal of Discourses are **not accurate**" (in a letter dated May 13, 1966).
- More recently, Apostle [Bruce McConkie](#) admits: "Yes, **President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things** the cultists [orthodox Christians] ascribe to him" (letter to Eugene England dated Feb. 19, 1981, photocopy available from Challenge Ministries, P.O. Box 20195, El Cajon, CA, 92021).

In fairness, Bruce McConkie went on to say (in the letter cited above): "**He** [Brigham Young] **expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel**" (letter to Eugene England dated Feb. 19, 1981). However, the consequences associated with Young's false teaching are not clear, because McConkie goes on to say: "We will be judged by what we believe among other things. If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned. If that belief is on basic and fundamental things, it will lead us astray and we will lose our souls...(2 Nephi 28:15). This clearly means that **people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and kind of being that God is, is one of these fundamentals. I repeat: Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and kind of being that God is and as to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation...**what he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach the false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will **damn us**" (letter to Eugene England dated Feb. 19, 1981). It is not clear why the ordinary Mormon is damned for doing this, but Brigham Young is not. For thorough documentation and discussion of this topic, two references should be consulted: [Turner](#) and [Vlachos](#)).

12. The Bible states Adam was only a created being, the first man.

- "And God **created** man in His own image, in the image of God He **created** him; male and female He **created** them" (Gen. 1:27).
- "Then the Lord God **formed man** of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and **man became** a living being" (Gen. 2:7).
- "When God **created** man, He made them in the likeness of God. He **created** them male and female" (Gen. 5:1-2).
- "For as in Adam all **die**" (1 Cor. 15:22).
- "So also it is written, 'the first man Adam **became** a living soul'" (1 Cor. 15:45).
- "For it was Adam who was first **created**" (1 Tim. 2:14).

What is more, this idea is inconsistent with the clear teaching of man's fallen nature being derived from Adam (Job 31:33; Hosea 6:7; Rom. 5:14). Orthodox Christians will recognize most of Brigham Young's statements about Adam to be complete blasphemy.

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Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Jesus

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section titled "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. Mormon prophets have taught that Jesus was conceived by sexual intercourse (physical union) between God the Father and Mary:

- Brigham Young taught: "The birth of the Savior was as **natural as are the births of our children**; it was the result of **natural action**. He partook of flesh and blood---was begotten of his Father as we were of our fathers" ([Journal of Discourses](#) vol.8, p.115); and "when the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness [[flesh](#) and [blood](#)]. He was **not begotten by the Holy Ghost**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.1, p.50).
- Brigham Young insisted: "I will say that I was naturally begotten; so was my father, and **also** my Savior Jesus Christ...he is the first begotten of his father in the flesh, and there was **nothing unnatural** about it" ([Journal of Discourses](#) vol.8, p.211); "Now remember from this time forth, and for ever, that **Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.1, p.51).
- Orson Pratt (LDS apostle) taught: "the Father and **Mother of Jesus**, according to the flesh, must have been **associated together** in the capacity of Husband and Wife...as God was the first husband to her, it may be that He only gave her to be the wife of Joseph while in this mortal state, and that He intended after the resurrection to **again take her as one of his own wives** to raise up immortal spirits in eternity" ([The Seer](#). p.158, 1853).
- Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "The birth of the Savior was a **natural** occurrence **unattended by any degree of mysticism**, and the Father God was the **literal parent of Jesus in the flesh** as well as in the spirit" (Religious Truths Defined, p.44).

This teaching persists today:

- Bruce McConkie (LDS apostle) states: "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father **in the same way that mortal men are begotten** by mortal fathers" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 547, 1979).
- Carfred Broderick (Mormon author) writes: "God is a procreating personage of flesh and bone...latter-day prophets have made it clear that despite what it says in Matthew 1:20, **the Holy Ghost was not the father of Jesus...The Savior was fathered by a personage of flesh and bone**" (Dialogue: A

Journal of Mormon Thought, Autumn, 1967, p.100-101).

Despite the well-documented position of previous Mormon prophets, presidents, and apostles about the nature of Christ's conception, modern LDS apologists maintain that "Christ was born of a virgin". How can they? By changing the definition of the word "virgin". The reasoning goes like this: since Mary had sexual relations with an immortal man, not a mortal man, the phrase "virgin birth" still applies.

- McConkie explains: "Suffice it to say that our Lord was born of a **virgin**, which is fitting and proper, and **also natural**, since the Father of the Child was an **immortal** Being" (The Promised Messiah, p. 466).

2. The Bible teaches that Jesus was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that the Messiah would be born of a virgin:

- "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a **virgin** will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14).
- "Now the birth of Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child **by the Holy Spirit**...for that which was conceived in her is **of the Holy Spirit**" (Matt. 1:18,20).
- "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'. And the angel answered and said to her 'The **Holy Spirit will come upon you** and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'" (Luke 1:34-5).

God intended that the birth of the Messiah would be a miraculous event that---like His resurrection---would provide evidence to the skeptical and confirm that the Messiah was indeed approved by the Father.

3. Mormon leaders have taught that Jesus was a polygamist. Because Mormon prophets considered polygamy a righteous principle and practiced it (despite reversals in doctrine and concessions to U.S. law by the LDS Church), it is easy to see why they taught Jesus was married and had multiple wives:

- Orson Pratt (LDS apostle) stated: "the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, **was a polygamist...marrying many honorable wives** himself...God the Father had a **plurality** of wives...the Son followed the example of his Father...both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ **inherit their wives** in eternity as well as in time" ([The Seer](#), p.172, 1853).

- Jedediah M. Grant (second counselor to Brigham Young) stated: "the burst of public sentiment in anathemas upon Christ and his disciples, **causing his crucifixion**, was evidently based on **polygamy...a belief of a plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus** and his followers" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 1, p.346).

Some Mormon leaders contend that the wedding at Cana was an account Jesus' marriage:

- Apostle [Orson Hyde](#): "...**Jesus Christ was married at Cana** of Galilee... **Mary, Martha, and others were his wives** ... he begat children" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 2, p.210).
- Jedediah M. Grant: "**Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana** of Galilee, and he told them what to do... Now there was actually a marriage; and if Jesus was not the bridegroom on that occasion, please tell who was. If any man can show this, and prove that it was not the Savior of the world, then I will acknowledge I am in error. We say **it was Jesus Christ who was married**, to be brought into the relation whereby he could see his seed, before he was crucified" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.2, p.82).
- Orson Hyde: "It will be borne in mind that once on a time, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and on a careful reading of that transaction, it will be discovered that no less a person than **Jesus Christ was married on that occasion**. If he was never married, **his intimacy with Mary and Martha, and the other Mary** also whom Jesus loved, must have been highly unbecoming and improper to say the best of it" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.4, p.259).
- [Orson Pratt](#): "We have now clearly shown that **God the Father had a plurality of wives**, one or more being in eternity, by whom He begat our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born... We have also proved most clearly that the **Son followed the example of his Father, and became the great Bridegroom** to whom kings' daughters and many honorable wives are to be married" ([The Seer](#), p. 172).

4. The Bible makes no explicit or implicit statements about Jesus being married.

The Mormon interpretation of John 2 as describing Jesus' own wedding ignores any reasonable reading of the plain text:

- The Apostle John's stated purpose in describing the wedding feast at Cana was to recount Christ's first miracle (Jn. 2:11).
- According to John, Jesus and the disciples came because his mother Mary was

invited (Jn. 2:1). Why would Jesus or His mother need to be invited to Jesus' own wedding (John 2:2)?

- Why is someone else referred to as the bridegroom (John 2:9)?
- Why is there no mention of a physical wife or physical offspring for Jesus anywhere else in the gospels or epistles?

The fact that **Jesus did not marry during his incarnation** is consistent with the New Testament claim that Jesus is the bridegroom and the church (collectively) is His bride.

- "For the husband is the head of the **wife**, as Christ also is head of the **church**...love your **wives**, just as Christ also loved the **church**...A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the **two shall become one flesh**. This mystery is great, but **I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church**" (Eph 5:23-32).
- "**He who has the bride is the bridegroom** [Jesus]; but the friend [John the Baptist] of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice" (Jn. 3:29). This passage occurs later in John and is not referring to the wedding at Cana.
- The Bible describes the marriage supper of the Lamb to the **church, His bride** (Rev. 19:7; 21:2,9).
- The Bible forbids polygamy, calling it an abomination (Deut 17:17; see also section on [polygamy](#)). Since Jesus was a spotless lamb (1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 9:14) without sin (Is. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21), **he could not have committed polygamy**.

5. The Mormon Church has taught that Jesus is the brother of Lucifer.

- President [Spencer W. Kimball](#) wrote "Long before you were born a program was developed by your creators ... The principal personalities in this great drama were a Father Elohim, perfect in wisdom, judgment, and person, and **two sons, Lucifer and Jehovah**." ([Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#), p. 32-33).
- [James Talmage](#) explains who Jehovah is: "**Jesus Christ was Jehovah**...Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.11,27).
- Milton R. Hunter (one of the LDS General Authorities) explains "The appointment of Jesus to be Savior of the world was contested by **one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer...this spirit-brother of Jesus** desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.15, 1945).

- Joseph Smith stated: "The contention in heaven was...Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the **Devil said he could save them all**, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favour of Jesus Christ. So the Devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 6, p. 8).
- "And Satan came among them, saying: **I am also a son of God**" ([Pearl of Great Price, Moses 5:17](#)).
- See also [Mormon Doctrine](#), pp.192, 546-47, 589-90 and [Gospel Principles](#) p.15-16.

6. The Bible describes Satan [Lucifer] as a created being:

- "You [Lucifer] were in Eden, the garden of God...on the day that **you were created**...you were the anointed cherub...you were blameless in your ways from the day **you were created** until unrighteousness was found in you...your heart was lifted up...you corrupted your wisdom" (Ez. 28:13,15,17).
- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which God **had made**" (Gen. 3:1).
- "Even Satan disguises himself as an **angel of light**. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14-5). Based on the construction of these sentences, the distinction being made is about the **type** of angel that Satan appears to be. His servants can disguise themselves as servants of righteousness but are in reality servants of unrighteousness; likewise, Satan is an angel of darkness but can disguise himself as an angel of light. According to the Bible, angels are created beings.

Satan cannot be a son of God if he is an angel:

- "But to which of the angels did He [God] ever say, 'Thou art my Son, today I have begotten Thee'?" (Heb. 1:5).

7. According to Mormon doctrine, Jesus was procreated as a spirit child of the Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother and later conceived physically by the Heavenly Father and an earthly mother: [The Ensign](#), Jan. 1989, pp.28-29; [Come Unto Christ](#) by Ezra Taft Benson, p.4).

- Bruce McConkie states: "Christ the Word, the Firstborn, had of course attained unto the status of Godhood **while yet in pre-existence**" ([What](#)

[Mormons Think of Christ](#), p.36).

- Bruce McConkie continues: "He is the Firstborn of the Father. By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, **while yet in his pre-existent state**" (Mormon Doctrine, 1966, pg. 129).
- [Orson Pratt](#): "God the Father had a plurality of wives, one or more being in eternity, by whom **He begat our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born**" (The Seer, p. 172).
- "Jesus Christ is not the Father of the **spirits** who have taken or yet shall take bodies upon this earth, for **He is one of them**. He is The Son, as they are sons and daughters of Elohim." ([Encyclopedia of Mormonism](#), vol.4, Appendix 4).

8. The Bible declares that Jesus has always existed and that all things were created through Him:

- "For **in Him** all things were created, both in the heavens and the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities---**all things have been created through Him and for Him**" (Col. 1:16).
- "**In the beginning was the Word** and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us [Jesus]" (Jn. 1:1,18).
- "**All things came into being through Him** [Jesus]; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (John 1:3).

9. Mormons worship the Father and the Son as separate Gods. Mormons teach that Jesus Christ is a God named Jehovah, a different God from God the Father, whose name is Elohim.

- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Three separate personages---Father, Son, and Holy Ghost---comprise the Godhead...As **each of these persons is a God**, it is evident from this standpoint alone, that a **plurality of Gods** exists. To us...these **three are the only Gods** we worship" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.576-7).
- [James Talmage](#) states: "This [the Trinity] **cannot rationally be construed to mean** that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one in substance and person" ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.40).
- [James Talmage](#) states: "**Jesus Christ was Jehovah**...Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In all of scripture, where God is mentioned and where he has appeared, it was Jehovah...The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.11,27).

- Joseph F. Smith stated, "Among the **spirit children** of Elohim, the first-born was and is **Jehovah, or Jesus Christ**, to whom all others are juniors" ([Gospel Doctrine](#), p.70).

In contrast, the Bible uses the names Elohim and Jehovah interchangeably for the one true God. The English form "Jehovah" was developed from four consonants (YHWH) from which we get the word "Yahweh," translated "LORD". The words "Yahweh" and "Elohim" are used together hundreds of times, as in: 'LORD our God', 'LORD my God', 'LORD his God', 'LORD your God'. For example: "The Lord [Jehovah] our God [Elohim] is one Lord [Jehovah]" (Deut. 6:4). See also Gen. 2:4-22; Deut. 4:1; Judges 5:3; 1 Sam. 2:30; Is. 44:6.

10. The Bible portrays Jesus as one member of the Trinity. Orthodox Christianity's established concept of God is that Jesus and the Father share the same essence (are one and the same God). A substantial part of the book of Colossians is dedicated to refuting a heresy denying Christ's Deity. A few of the relevant passages are given below in which Jesus is identified with, and acts as, [God](#):

Statements about Jesus' Deity:

- "In Him [Jesus] all the **fullness of Deity** dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).
- "It was the Father's good pleasure for **all the fullness** to dwell in Him [Jesus]" (Col. 1:19).
- "He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [God] glory and the **exact representation of His nature**" (Heb. 1:3).
- "But of the **Son** He [God] says, 'Thy Throne **O God** is forever and ever'" (Heb. 1:8).
- "In the **beginning was the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us" (John 1:1,14).
- Of Jesus it was announced: "These are the words of **Him who is the First and the Last**, who died and came to life again" (Rev. 2:8); the same claim made by God Almighty: "This is what the LORD says -- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: **I am the first and I am the last**; apart from me there is no God" (Is. 44:6). Also, compare Rev. 22:13 with Is. 48:12.

Claims by Jesus about His Deity:

- Jesus claimed: 'I and the Father are **one**', meaning **in essence** not just purpose (from the Greek construction), a statement the Jews clearly understood because they "took up stones again to stone Him" (Jn. 10:30-31).
- Jesus also claimed: "Before Abraham was born, **I AM**" [ego eimi], a

restatement of the name God used for himself to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**"; the Jews also understood its import and tried to stone Jesus. (Jn. 8:58-59; Ex. 3:14). See also Jn. 13:19, 18:5,6,8).

- Jesus makes the same claim again: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that **I AM**, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).
- "Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father'...Jesus said to him...'**He who has seen Me has seen the Father**'" (Jn. 14:8-9).
- "He who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me" (Jn. 12:45).

Jesus allowed Himself to be worshipped, despite the biblical edict that '**only God may be worshipped**' (Acts 10:25-26; Rev. 19:10; 22:9):

- "Thomas answered [to Jesus] 'My Lord and **My God**'" (John 20:28).
- "When I saw Him [Jesus], I **fell at His feet**" (Rev. 1:17).
- "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to **worship him**" (Matt. 2:2).

For more detailed explanations of the Trinity, refer to published articles by [Grider](#) and [Martin](#), and the [CARM webpage](#).

11. Mormon leaders teach that Jesus is our elder brother who progressed to become a god.

- Milton R. Hunter: "**Jesus became a God** and reached His great state of understanding **through consistent effort and continuous obedience** to all the Gospel truths and universal laws" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.51).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Christ the Word, the Firstborn, had of course **attained unto the status of Godhood** while yet in pre-existence" ([What Mormons Think of Christ](#), p.36).
- Bruce McConkie claimed: "Jesus kept the commandments of his Father and thereby **worked out his own salvation**, and also set an example as to the way and the means whereby all men may be saved" (The Mortal Messiah, Vol.4, p.434).
- McConkie continues: "He [Jesus] is the Firstborn of the Father. **By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained** that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 129).

12. The Bible states that Jesus has existed as God eternally. Here are a few of many verses stating this:

- "In the **beginning was the Word...** the Word was God... the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us" John 1:1,14).
- "But **of the Son** He [God] says, 'Thy Throne O God is **forever and ever**'" (Heb. 1:8).
- "Christ Jesus, who although **He existed** in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6).
- "glorify me together with Thyself Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee **before the world was**" (John 17:5).
- "God...has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds**" (Heb. 1:2).

13. The Mormon church teaches that Jesus Christ plays only an initial role in our salvation. In other words, the work of Christ on the cross is **insufficient** for our complete salvation (exaltation) and **we must also perform works** in order to be fully saved.

- The Book of Mormon says of salvation: "for we know that is is by grace that we are saved, **after all that we can do**" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 25:23).
- The Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**" ([Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) explains what that last phrase means: "that which **man merits through his own acts** through life and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.134).
- [Spencer W. Kimball](#) stated: "living **all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins** and assures one of exaltation...**trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance** when one merely tries to abandon sin" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p.164-165, 354-355).

More information can be found in the section on [salvation](#).

14. The Bible clearly states that our complete salvation comes only through the finished work of Christ on the cross, apart from any work on our part. One verse from the Bible sums up the problem with the Mormon concept of salvation:

- "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and **seeking to establish their**

own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).

This was Paul's description of the Jews but applies as well to Mormons and to anyone who thinks they need to, or can, add to the completed work of Christ. According to the Bible, our **works prove we have salvation, but cannot help us attain salvation**:

- "I do not frustrate the grace of God; **for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly**" (Gal. 2:21).
- "For by grace you have been saved through **faith**; and that **not of yourselves**, it is the gift of God; **not as a result of works**, that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).
- "The **blood** of Jesus Christ his Son **cleanses us** from **all sin**" (1 Jn. 1:7).
- Paul to the Phillipian jailer's question: "What must **I do** to be saved? **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).
- Jesus to the thief on the cross, who **did nothing but trust Him as Messiah and King**: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
- Jesus: "**This is the work of God**, that **you believe on him** whom He [God the Father] has sent" (Jn. 5:29).
- "**He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness**, but according to his mercy." (Titus 3:5).
- "For Christ is the **end of the law for righteousness** to everyone who **believes**" (Rom. 10:4).

In contrast to Mormon leaders, in the New Testament the Apostle Paul clearly states the Gospel and salvation are without any works on our part. For specific references and discussion see the section on [salvation](#).

15. Mormon leaders have taught that certain sins are beyond the atoning blood of Christ.

- Brigham Young said: "It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet **men can commit sins which it can never remit**...there are sins that can be atoned for by an offering on the altar...and there are sins that the blood of a lamb...cannot remit, but they **must be atoned for by the blood of the man**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.4, p.53-54, also published in [Deseret News](#), p.235, 1856).
- Brigham Young also said: "There is not a man or a woman, who violates the covenants [fidelity in marriage] made with their God, that will not be **required to pay the debt**. The **blood of Christ will never wipe that out**,

- your own blood must atone for it" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.3, p.247)**
- [Bruce McConkie](#) explains: "But under certain circumstances there are some serious sins for which the **cleansing of Christ does not operate**, and the law of God is that **men must then have their own blood shed to atone** for their sins" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.92).
 - McConkie continues: "Christians speak often of the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. Much that is believed and taught on this subject, however, **is such utter nonsense and so palpably false that to believe it is to lose one's salvation**. Many go so far, for instance, as to pretend, at least, to believe that if we confess Christ with our lips and avow that we accept Him as our personal Savior, we are thereby saved. His blood, without other act than mere belief, they say, makes us clean" ([What the Mormons Think of Christ](#), p.22).
 - [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) shows that this idea originated with Joseph Smith: "Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors **beyond the power of atonement of Christ**. If these offenses are committed, then the **blood of Christ will not cleanse** them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their **only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone**, as far as possible, in their behalf" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.135); "the **law of sacrifice will have to be restored**...Sacrifice by the shedding of blood was instituted in the days of Adam and of necessity will have to be restored" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 3, p.94).
 - Brigham Young said: "Will you love your brothers and sisters likewise, when they have **committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their own blood?**...This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is **necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved**, spill it" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 4, p.219-220).
 - B.H. Roberts stated: "what is needful for the salvation of the soul where **one's sins place him beyond the reach of vicarious means of salvation** [by Jesus] --- then it is the **shedding of the sinner's own blood** that must be here referred to" ([A Comprehensive History of the Church](#), vol.4, p.129, 1965).

The LDS Church officially denies the **doctrine of Blood Atonement** now, even saying that it was never taught. Here are additional arguments to the contrary:

- Blood atonement was practiced in Utah during Brigham Young's presidency and during the presidency of his immediate successors. The facts have been extremely well documented in sources readily available to the public ([Tanner, Kelly](#)).
- The Salt Lake Tribune, wrote, "In the past decade, potential jurors in every Utah capital homicide were asked whether they believed in the **Mormon concept of 'blood atonement'**" (Concept of Blood Atonement Survives in

Utah Despite Repudiation, Salt Lake Tribune, 11/5/94, p.D1).

- When child-killer James Edward Wood, a Mormon, was tried for the murder of 11-year-old Jaralee Underwood, he was visited by LDS Church leaders who "**talked to him about shedding his own blood**" (Salt Lake Tribune, 11/5/98, D1).
- University of Utah professor Richard J. Cummings writes: Accordingly, the **doctrine** [blood atonement] asserts that those who commit certain grievous sins such as murder and covenant-breaking place themselves beyond the atoning blood of Christ, and their only hope for salvation is to have their own blood shed as an atoning sacrifice. In his writings, Joseph Smith only **hinted at the doctrine**, Brigham Young successively **denied and asserted it**, Joseph F. Smith **ardently defended it**, and in more recent years, Hugh B. Brown repudiated it and Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie both have **vigorously defended it in principle** while staunchly denying that the Church has ever put it into actual practice, whereas most other General Authorities have prudently preferred to remain silent on the subject. It should be noted that the whole notion of blood atonement is so obviously linked to the Mormon literal mind-set that it does not seem to admit of a mitigated, symbolic interpretation and is either accepted or rejected outright, depending on one's level of literalistic belief (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Vol.15, No.4, p.93).

16. The Bible teaches that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was complete for all time and that we cannot add to it with our works:

- "He is able to **save forever** those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb. 7:25).
- "He entered the holy place **once for all**, having obtained **eternal redemption**" (Heb. 9:12).
- "So Christ also, having been **offered once** to bear the sins of many, shall appear..." (Heb. 9:28).
- "He, having offered **one sacrifice for sins for all time**" (Heb. 10:12).
- "For by **one offering He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).
- "There is **no longer any offering for sin**" (Heb. 10:18).
- "Having forgiven us all our transgressions, having **cancelled out the certificate of debt...He has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches two very important and fundamental truths in regard to keeping the law:

A. Following the law cannot take away sin:

- "our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (Is. 64:6).
- "For the law...can never by the same sacrifices year by year...make perfect those who draw near...but in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is **impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**" (Heb. 10:1-4).
- "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same **sacrifices, which can never take away sins**" (Heb 10:11).
- "For the **law made nothing perfect**" (Heb 7:19).
- "**by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**" (Gal. 2:16).
- "For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly" (Gal. 2:21).
- "For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law" (Gal. 3:21-22).
- "Therefore the law has become a **tutor** to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor**" (Gal. 3:24-25).

B. Even if an additional sacrifice would be acceptable to God, which it is not (Heb. 10:18), we are **not qualified or able to add anything** to our redemption, because **we meet none of the requirements**:

- a. Atonement requires the shedding of blood (Lev. 17:11).
- b. The sacrifice must be unblemished (Lev. 22:19).
- c. The sacrifice must be performed by an appointed Priest (1 Sam. 2:28).
- d. The High Priest must be lawfully clean (Ex. 29:1-9;19-35).

Jesus is the only one who has **fulfilled all** of these conditions: a) Heb. 9:22; b) 1 Peter 1:19; c) Heb. 2:14; 5:1; d) Heb. 9:22.

17. Mormon Leaders have claimed that Jesus Christ is only one of many Saviors:

- According to Joseph Fielding Smith: "We are not the only people that the Lord has created. **We have brothers and sisters on other earths**. They look like us because they, too, are the children of God and were created in his image, for they are also his offspring" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#) 1:62).
- Brigham Young taught: "Sin is upon every earth that ever was created ... Consequently **every earth has its redeemer**, and every earth has its tempter" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 14, p.71).

18. The Bible states that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the one and only Messiah.

- Jesus claimed: "**I am THE way, THE truth, and THE life**; no one comes to the Father but by Me" (Jn. 14:6).
- "For there is one God and **one mediator** also between God and men: the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- "There is **salvation in no one else**; for there is **no other name under heaven** that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

19. Mormon leaders have discouraged their members from pursuing a personal relationship with Christ.

- Mormon Apostle and apologist Bruce McConkie warns: "I shall speak of our relationship with the Lord and of the true fellowship all saints should have with the Father. **I shall set forth what we must believe relative to the Father and the Son in order to gain eternal life**...many false and vain and foolish things are being taught in the sectarian world and even among us about our need to gain a special relationship with the Lord Jesus...**gaining a special relationship with Christ is both improper and perilous**...now I know that some may be offended at the counsel that **they should not strive for a special and personal relationship with Christ**...you have been warned, and **you have heard the true doctrine taught**" (from a speech given at a B.Y.U. devotional on March 2, 1982).

20. The Bible encourages a personal, intimate relationship of each believer with Christ because He is our only source of true life:

- Jesus said: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so **neither can you unless you abide in Me...apart from Me you can do nothing**" (Jn. 15:4-5).
- Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, **you have no life in yourselves**...He who **eats my flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life**...My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink" (Jn. 6:51-55).
- Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the **life**" (Jn. 11:25).
- "For I have been crucified with Christ and **it is no longer I who live**, but

Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

- "When **Christ who is our life** is revealed, then you also shall be revealed with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).
- Paul's desire was: "that I may **know Him** [Jesus]" (Phil. 3:10).
- God is faithful, by whom you were called into the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

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The Mormon Church Claims to be the Only True Church

Does Joseph Smith Jr. play a role in our salvation?

- Joseph Fielding Smith said: [There is] "**no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith**. If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth...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, p.190).
- Brigham Young stated: "no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God **without the consent of Joseph Smith**...every man and woman must have the **certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance** into the mansion where God and Christ are" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p.289).
- Brigham Young also declared, "he that confesseth not that Jesus has come in the flesh and sent Joseph Smith with the fullness of the Gospel to this generation, is not of God, but is anti-christ" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 9, p.312).
- President George Q. Cannon said: "If we get our salvation, **we shall have to pass by him** [Joseph Smith]; if we enter our glory, it will be through the authority he has received. **We cannot get around him** [Joseph Smith]" (as quoted in 1988 Melchizedek Priesthood Study Guide, p. 142).

Can salvation can come only through the LDS Church?

- Mormon scriptures claim that the LDS church is "the **only true** and living church upon the face of the whole earth" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#), 1:30).
- Joseph Smith stated: "This [the LDS] Church...is the **only true and living church** upon the face of the whole earth" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 1:30).
- President Ezra Taft Benson said: "This is not just another Church. **This is not just one of a family of Christian churches**. This is the Church and kingdom of God, **the only true Church** upon the face of the earth..." (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.164-165).
- Bruce McConkie stated: "**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**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.670).

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- Marion Romney (LDS First Presidency) said, "This Church is the ensign on the mountain spoken of by the Old Testament prophets. **It is the way, the truth, and the life**" (Conference Report, April, 1961, pg. 119).

Statements by Mormon Leaders about Christian churches (made by many of the LDS Prophet-Presidents):

- Joseph Smith stated that God told him: "they [other churches] were **all wrong**; and the Personage who addressed me said that **their creeds were an abomination** in his sight; that **those professors were all corrupt**" (from [Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1:19](#)).
- Joseph Smith continues: "for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to **destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible**" (from [Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History 1:12](#)). "What is it that inspires professors of Christianity generally with a hope of salvation? It is that smooth, sophisticated influence of the devil, by which he deceives the whole world" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.270).
- Questions put to Joseph Smith: "'Do you believe the Bible?' [Smith:] 'If we do, **we are the only people under heaven that does**, for there are **none of the religious sects of the day that do**'. When asked 'Will everybody be damned, but Mormons?' [Smith replied] 'Yes, and a great portion of them, unless they repent, and work righteousness.'" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 119).
- Brigham Young stated this repeatedly: "When the light came to me I saw that all the **so-called Christian world was grovelling in darkness**" ([Journal of Discourses 5:73](#)); "The **Christian world, so-called, are heathens** as to the knowledge of the salvation of God" ([Journal of Discourses 8:171](#)); "With a regard to true theology, a more ignorant people never lived than the present so-called Christian world" ([Journal of Discourses 8:199](#)); "And who is there that acknowledges [God's] hand? ... You may wander east, west, north, and south, and **you cannot find it** in any church or government on the earth, **except** the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 6, p.24); "Should you ask why we differ from other Christians, as they are called, it is simply because **they are not Christians** as the New Testament defines Christianity" ([Journal of Discourses 10:230](#)).
- Orson Pratt proclaimed: "Both **Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the 'whore of Babylon'** whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornications and wickedness. Any person who shall be so corrupt as to receive a holy ordinance of the Gospel from the ministers of any of these **apostate churches** will be **sent down to hell with them**, unless they repent" ([The Seer](#), p. 255).
- Pratt also said: "This **great apostasy** commenced about the close of the first

century of the Christian era, and it has been waxing worse and worse from then until now" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.18, p.44) and: "But as **there has been no Christian Church on the earth for a great many centuries** past, until the present century, the people have lost sight of the pattern that God has given according to which the Christian Church should be established, and they have denominated a great variety of people Christian Churches, because they profess to be ...But there has been a **long apostasy**, during which the nations have been cursed with apostate churches in great abundance" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 18:172).

- President John Taylor stated: "Christianity...is a perfect pack of nonsense...the devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work than the Christianity of the nineteenth century." ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 6, p.167); "Where shall we look for the true order or authority of God? **It cannot be found in any nation of Christendom.**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 10:127).
- [James Talmage](#) said: "A self-suggesting interpretation of history indicates that there has been a great departure from the way of salvation as laid down by the Savior, a **universal apostasy** from the Church of Christ". ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.182).
- President [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) said: "Doctrines were corrupted, authority lost, and a **false order of religion took the place of the gospel of Jesus Christ**, just as it had been the case in former dispensations, and the people were left in spiritual darkness." ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), p.266). "For hundreds of years the world was wrapped in a veil of **spiritual darkness**, until there was **not one fundamental truth belonging to the place of salvation** ...Joseph Smith declared that in the year 1820 the Lord revealed to him that all the 'Christian' churches were in error, teaching for commandments the doctrines of men" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 3, p.282).
- More recent statements by apostle [Bruce McConkie](#) are also very clear: "Apostasy was universal...And this **darkness still prevails** except among those who have come to a knowledge of the restored gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol 3, p.265); "Thus the signs of the times include the **prevailing apostate darkness in the sects of Christendom** and in the religious world in general" ([The Millennial Messiah](#), p.403); "a perverted Christianity holds sway among the so-called Christians of apostate Christendom" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.132); "virtually all the **millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves** before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ whom they vainly suppose to be a spirit essence who is incorporeal uncreated, immaterial and three-in-one with the Father and Holy Spirit" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.269); "Gnosticism is one of the great pagan philosophies which antedated Christ and the Christian Era and which was later commingled with pure Christianity to form **the apostate religion that has prevailed in the world** since the early days of that era." ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.316).
- President [George Q. Cannon](#) said: "After the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints was organized, there were only two churches upon the earth. They were known respectively as the Church of the Lamb of God and Babylon. The various **organizations which are called churches throughout Christendom**, though differing in their creeds and organizations, have one common origin. They all **belong to Babylon**" (Gospel Truth, p.324).

- President Wilford Woodruff stated: "the Gospel of **modern Christendom shuts up the Lord**, and stops all communication with Him. I want nothing to do with such a Gospel, I would rather prefer the Gospel of the dark ages, so called" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 2, p.196).

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References: Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Salvation

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section titled "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. Mormons teach that salvation (exaltation) comes through faith in Christ plus baptism plus works, i.e., we must add to the work of Christ. In the Bible 'salvation' means deliverance from the consequence (eternal separation from God) of our sin. Mormon leaders have [redefined](#) the word 'salvation' to have a two-fold meaning: a) forgiveness of sins and b) **universal resurrection**:

- "There will be a General Salvation for all in the sense in which that term is generally used, but salvation, **meaning resurrection**, is not exaltation" (Stephen L. Richards, Contributions of Joseph Smith, LDS tract, p.5).
- "All men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part, **meaning they are resurrected**" ([Bruce McConkie](#), What Mormons Think of Christ", LDS tract, p.28).

Thus, when a Mormon speaks of 'salvation by grace', he is usually referring to universal resurrection. Mormons use the term 'exaltation' to refer to attain a place in the highest level of heaven. **The Mormon term 'exaltation' is more nearly equivalent to the Biblical term 'salvation'**. What do Mormon leaders say about this?

- The Book of Mormon says of salvation: "for we know that is is by grace that we are saved, **after all that we can do**" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 25:23).
- The LDS Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**" ([Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) explains what that last phrase means: "that which **man merits through his own acts** through life and **by obedience to the laws and ordinances** of the gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.134).
- [James Talmage](#) explains: "...redemption from personal sins can only be obtained through **obedience** to the requirement of **the Gospel, and a life of good works**" (James Talmage, in [A Study of the Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Spencer W. Kimball](#) states: "however powerful the **saving grace of Christ, it brings exaltation to no man who does not comply with the works of the gospel**" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, pg. 207); "Each command we obey **sends us another rung up the ladder** to perfected manhood and toward



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godhood; and every law disobeyed is a sliding toward the bottom where man merges into the brute world" ([Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#), pg. 153); "living **all** the commandments **guarantees total forgiveness of sins** and assures one of exaltation...**trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance** when one merely tries to abandon sin" ([The Miracle of Forgiveness](#), p.164-165, 354-355).

- [Bruce McConkie](#) claimed: "Jesus kept the commandments of his Father and thereby **worked out his own salvation**, and also **set an example as to the way and the means** whereby all men may be saved" ([The Mortal Messiah](#), Vol.4, p.434).

What works do they mean? Here are some:

- **Baptism for the dead**: "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead...Those saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at **peril of their own salvation**" ([Joseph Smith](#), in [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.356, 196).
- **Marriages sealed in the Temple**: "Marriage is not only a righteous institution, but obedience to this law [Temple marriage] is **absolutely necessary** in order to obtain the **highest exaltation** in the Kingdom of God" (Milton R. Hunter, in [Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.119).
- **Keeping the whole law**: "To enter the celestial [kingdom] 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](#), in [The Way to Perfection](#), p.206).
- **Plural marriage**: "the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on earth, and that **without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fullness of exaltation** in the celestial glory" (William Clayton in [Historical Record](#), p.266); "**the only men who become gods, even the Son of God, are those who enter into polygamy**" ([Brigham Young](#), in [Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 11, p.269). This doctrine has been downplayed by recent church leaders but its stated requirement for exaltation by the LDS founders can be well [documented](#).

Because these ordinances can only be kept in the Mormon church, that church claims to be the [only path](#) to true salvation.

2. According to the Bible, our salvation comes only through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, apart from any work on our part. Mormons accuse Christians

of teaching "cheap grace", whereby one can believe in Christ and then live however one pleases. But the Apostle Paul anticipates this response and shows why it is false in Romans chp. 6. Mormons have the same problem with Paul's concept as do many of the cults formed in the first century: it's too simple, too easy, and could be attained by anyone.

A serious problem with the Mormon argument that the 'Christian concept of grace can be easily abused' is that it **denies the Biblical promise that anyone who comes to Christ will be transformed by God into a new creation** with a new heart created to serve Him by the power of the Holy Spirit:

- "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away, behold **new things have come**" (2 Cor. 5:17).
- "Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the **new self who is being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:10).
- "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the **new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth" (Eph. 4:23-24).
- "However, you are **not in the flesh** but in the Spirit, if indeed the **Spirit of God dwells in you**" (Rom. 8:9).
- "It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**" (Gal. 2:20).
- "I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you, and I will remove the heart of stone...and I will put **My Spirit** within you and **cause you to walk in My statutes**" (Ezekiel. 36:26-27).

A second problem with the Mormon teaching on salvation is that it reveals a **misunderstanding of the place of works** in a Christian's life as described in the New Testament.

a. Works do not help us earn God's favor:

- "For Christ is the **end of the law for righteousness** to everyone who **believes**" (Rom. 10:4).
- "I do not frustrate the grace of God; **for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly**" (Gal. 2:21).
- "**He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness**, but according to his mercy" (Titus 3:5).

b. Rather, works that God does through us glorify Him and prove we are Christians:

- "I will **show you my faith** by my works" (James 2:18).
- "By this **all men will know you are my disciples**, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34).
- "**We know that we have passed out of death into life**, because we love the

brethren" (1 Jn. 3:14).

- "...that they may be perfected in unity, that the **world may know** that You [God the Father] sent Me [Jesus] and loved Me" (Jn. 17:23).
- "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is **God who is at work in you, both to will and to work** for His good pleasure" (Phil. 3:12-13).
- "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works which God prepared** beforehand that **we should walk in them**" (Eph. 2:10).

What is more, salvation by works is not even possible. Why not? First, because even our best deeds are impure and ineffective:

- "**our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment**" (Is. 64:6).
- We are "justified by faith in Christ, and **not by the works** of the law; since **by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**" (Gal. 2:16).
- "For the **law...can never by the same sacrifices year by year...make perfect those who draw near...but in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**" (Heb. 10:1-4).
- "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same **sacrifices, which can never take away sins**" (Heb 10:11).
- "For the **law made nothing perfect**" (Heb 7:19).
- "For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly" (Gal. 2:21).
- "For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law" (Gal. 3:21-22).

Second, God's standard is too high for us to attain---**absolute perfection**:

- "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in **one point**, he has become **guilty of all**" (James 2:10).
- Jesus explained that God's standard was much higher than just outward deeds: "Whoever shall **say** [to his brother] 'you fool' shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire" (Matt. 5:22); "Every one who **looks** on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28); "**Every careless word** that men shall speak, they shall render account for it on the day of judgement" (Matt. 12:36).

If we are all guilty of breaking the whole law, how many good works will it take to redeem us? Therefore, the Bible can make the outrageous and wonderful promise that **we can know for sure that we will go to heaven**, because the work of redemption by Jesus is [complete](#):

- "These things I have written unto you who **believe** in the name of the Son of

- God, **in order that you may know that you have eternal life**" (1 Jn. 5:13).
- "therefore having been **justified by faith**, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).
 - "Therefore brethren, **we have confidence to enter the holy place** by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).
 - Jesus told his followers who believe that they have eternal life (Jn. 1:12; 5:24; 6:40; 20:31).

That there could be nothing left for us to do is incomprehensible to Mormons. Yet the Bible says we are to rest in the finished work of Christ:

- "For the one **who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works**, as God did from His (Heb. 4:10).

3. The Mormon church teaches that the 'gospel' consists of Christ's redemptive work plus our obedience to laws, principles, ordinances, and rites.

- The Book of Mormon says of salvation: "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, **after all that we can do**" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 25:23).
- The LDS Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**" ([Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) states: "**man merits through his own acts** through life and **by obedience to the laws and ordinances** of the gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.134).
- [Spencer W. Kimball](#) stated: "living **all** the commandments **guarantees total forgiveness of sins** and assures one of exaltation...**trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance** when one merely tries to abandon sin" ([The Miracle of Forgiveness](#), p.164-165, 354-355).

Because these 'ordinances of the gospel' can only be kept in the LDS church, the Mormon church claims to be the [only path](#) to true salvation.

4. The Bible teaches that the 'gospel' (good news) is the message of Christ's complete redemptive work. As Paul explains to the church at Corinth, "the gospel which I **preached** to you, which you also **received**, in which you also **stand**, by which you also are **saved**" (1 Cor. 15:1-2):

- "I also delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that **He was raised** on the third day **according to the Scriptures**, and that **He appeared** to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that **He appeared** to more than five hundred brethren at one time..." (1 Cor. 15:1-6).

And to the church at Rome, Paul says:

- "the gospel of God, which He **promised** beforehand through His prophets in the holy **Scriptures** concerning His Son, who was **born** of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was **declared with power** to be the Son of God **by the resurrection** from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:1-4).

Central to this message, as indicated by the highlighted words in the above passages, is the **historical, verifiable fact** that **Christ was raised from the dead** (1 Cor. 15:12-14):

- it was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, validating Jesus as Messiah,
- it was the culmination of His miraculous power, validating Jesus as Messiah,
- it was verified by several sets of witnesses (over 500),
- it confirmed that God accepted Christ's sacrifice for our sins (1 Cor. 15:17),
- it gives us hope for our own resurrection (1Cor. 15:19-20).

Our part is not to perform works in order to gain acceptance, our part is that we believe and receive Jesus Christ, which means **placing our total trust in Him for salvation**. This is the meaning of the Greek word John used for 'believe' over 50 times in his gospel:

- "Through His name every one who **believes** in Him **has received** forgiveness of sins " (Acts 10:43).
- "He who hears my word and **believes** Him who sent Me has eternal life and **does not** come into judgement" (Jn. 5:24).
- "Every one who beholds the Son, and **believes** in Him, may **have** eternal life, and I myself **will raise him up** on the last day" (Jn. 6:40).
- "As many as **received** Him, to them He **gave** the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** on His name" (Jn. 1:12).
- "By grace **you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

5. Mormons teach that the LDS Church is the only way to enter the highest

heaven.

- The Mormon scriptures state: "this church [Joseph Smith's]... **only true and living** church upon the face of the whole earth" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#), 1:30).
- Apostle [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "There is **no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.670).
- Marion Romney (speaking as a member of the LDS First Presidency) said, "This Church is the ensign on the mountain spoken of by the Old Testament prophets. **It is the way**, the truth, and the life" (Conference Report, April, 1961, pg. 119).
- Mormon president and prophet [Brigham Young](#) declared: "he that confesseth not that Jesus has come in the flesh **and sent Joseph Smith with the fullness of the Gospel** to this generation, is not of God, but is anti-christ" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.9, p.312).
- Mormon president and prophet [Ezra Taft Benson](#) stated: "This is not just another Church. This is **not just one of a family of Christian churches**. This is THE Church and kingdom of God, **THE only true Church** upon the face of the earth..." (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.164-165).

What is more, Mormon leaders have taught that Joseph Smith must give his consent before anyone can enter heaven:

- [There is] "**no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith**" ([Joseph Fielding Smith](#), in [Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.190).
- "No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God **without the consent of Joseph Smith**" ([Brigham Young](#), in [Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p.289).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "**If it had not been for Joseph Smith** and the restoration, there would be **no salvation**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.670).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) said: "If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth...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, p.190).
- Brigham Young stated: "every man and woman must have the **certificate of Joseph Smith**, junior, as a **passport to their entrance** into the mansion where God and Christ are" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p.289).
- George Q. Cannon: "If we get our salvation, **we shall have to pass by him** [Joseph Smith]; if we enter our glory, it will be through the authority he has received. **We cannot get around him** [Joseph Smith]" (quoted in the Melchizedek Priesthood Study Guide, p. 142, 1988).

Any true Christian should be appalled by these statements because they undermine

the completed and accepted sacrifice of Christ.

6. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the **ONLY** way to God and heaven.

- Jesus said: "I am **THE** way, **THE** truth, and **THE** life; **no one** comes to the Father but through Me" (Jn. 14:6).
- "And there is salvation in **no one else**; for there is **no other name** [Jesus] under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- "For there is one God, and **one mediator** also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5).

7. The Mormon church teaches there are **three levels to heaven**, and only those who are worthy LDS members will attain the highest level:

- **Telestial Kingdom** - is where unbelievers go: "These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus...who receive not his fullness in the eternal world", but shall be "redeemed from the devil [at] the last resurrection" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 82-86).
- **Terrestrial Kingdom** - is for religious people who aren't Mormons and for Mormons who have not met the requirements of the Church, i.e., "Honorable men of the earth who are blinded by the craftiness of men and who therefore do not accept and live the gospel law" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 784). While this level is not as desirable as the Celestial Kingdom, the presence of the Son is evident there: "These are they who receive of his glory but not of his fulness... **the presence of the Son, but not the fullness of the Father**...who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus...they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of God" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 76-79).
- **Celestial Kingdom** - is for Mormons who have kept **ALL** of the laws and ordinances of their church: "These are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized...in the water...**keeping the commandments that they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins**, and receive the Holy Spirit ..." ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 51-57).; "**they are gods**, even the sons of God...these shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever...whose names are written in heaven" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 58-68).

What will the celestial kingdom supposedly be like for a good Mormon? He will be a **god** and he will rule over a **planet** with his wives and spirit children.

Incidentally, the Mormon doctrine about the three levels of heaven is derived from **two verses** in the Bible, 2 Cor. 12:2 and 1 Cor. 15:40, where the Apostle Paul refers to different degrees of glory (see below) and to someone (presumably himself) as being caught up in the "third heaven". Mormon leaders have completely misinterpreted and misconstrued these verses to mean that there are three levels of heaven. The additional "revelation" from which they get the three levels supposedly came to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon on Feb. 16, 1832 as recorded in Section 76 of the [Doctrine and Covenants](#).

8. The Bible describes only one heaven as a believer's reward. Heaven is the place where:

- Only true believers in Christ will be allowed entrance (Hebrews 12:23; John 3:16-21; Rev. 2:11; 20:6).
- Believers will abide with God for all eternity in His presence. The light of the Lamb will fill it (Rev. 21:23).
- Entrance will not be attained by [works](#).

The Bible does use the term for 'heaven' in three ways, although it never distinguishes between 3 levels relevant to our eternal destiny:

- A 'first' heaven is the earth's atmosphere: "The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands" (Deut. 28:12). See also Deut. 11:17; Judges 5:4; Acts 14:17.
- A 'second' heaven is outer space (sun, moon and stars stars): "They will be exposed to the sun and the moon and all the stars of the heavens which they have loved and served" (Jeremiah 8:2). See also Ps. 19:4,6; Is. 13:10.
- A 'third' heaven is the dwelling place of God: "then hear from heaven, your dwelling place" (1 Kings 8:30). See also Ps. 2:4; Matt. 5:16.

There will be different degrees of reward in heaven, which are then cast at Jesus' feet (Rev. 4:4,10), but all who are there will be with Christ (Rev. 22:4-5).

9. Mormon leaders teach that there is no eternal hell. Although the Book of Mormon mentions a literal, everlasting hell (e.g. 2 Nephi 28), later 'revelations' to church leaders teach the concept of a "preparatory stage between death and a final judgement", similar to the Catholic concept of purgatory.

- John A Widtsoe, Mormon Apostle states: "The meanest sinner will find some place in the heavenly realm...In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **there is no Hell. All will find a measure of salvation**" (Joseph Smith-Seeker After Truth, p.177-178, 1951).
- Mormon historian B.H. Roberts explains: "Christians believed that to receive eternal punishment was to be punished eternally. This popular **Christian error** was corrected in a revelation" (Outlines of Ecclesiastical History, p.408).
- One of the Mormon 'revelations' states: "Nevertheless, it is **not written that there shall be no end** to this torment" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 19:6).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) explains the meaning of that passage: "We learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that eternal punishment, or everlasting punishment, **does not mean** that a man condemned will endure this punishment forever" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.2, p.160).

Mormons claim that the inhabitants of hell will receive a second chance at redemption:

- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "Every man who hears the gospel message is under obligation to receive it. If he fails, then **in the spirit world he will be called upon to receive it**" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.2, p.183).
- Joseph Fielding Smith also stated: "they will first go to hell and remain there until the corruption with which they are impregnated is burnt out; and the day will yet come when they will come to me and **acknowledge me as their Savior, and I will redeem them and bring them forth from hell**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.3, p.109).
- [Joseph Smith](#) claimed to receive a 'revelation' showing him that: "These are they who are thrust down into hell...who shall not be redeemed from the devil **until** the last resurrection" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 84-85).

Mormons also teach that a special place called **perdition** is reserved "for Satan, and the Sons of Perdition, angels who rebelled with him and also for men who commit the unpardonable sin" (Talmage, [A Study of the Articles of Faith](#)).

10. The Bible warns that a real and eternal hell awaits those who do not trust in Christ in this life. In fact, of the 24 times hell is referenced in the New Testament, 22 of those were made by Jesus ([McElveen](#)).

- Those who will go to hell include every person who does not place trusting faith in Christ for redemption from their sins (John 3:18).

- Jesus specifically described how real hell is for unbelievers (Matt. 8:12, 25:41-46).
- It is eternal separation from God in a painful and final state (Rev. 14:10-11; 2 Thess. 1:9).
- It is, in actuality, a second death (Rev. 21:8).

The Bible does not speak of any opportunity to obtain salvation after rejecting Christ in this life; rather it says:

- "it is appointed for **men to die once, and after this comes judgement**" (Heb. 9:27).

11. Mormon leaders teach that 'salvation' is universal. This is in addition to, and distinct from, the biblical concept that "there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24:15). To Mormons, salvation is equated with resurrection:

- John A Widtsoe states: "In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **there is no Hell. All will find a measure of salvation**" (Joseph Smith-Seeker After Truth, p.177-178, 1951).
- James Talmage states: "**Even the unbeliever**, the heathen, and the child who dies before reaching the years of discretion, **all are redeemed** by the Savior's self-sacrifice from the individual consequences of the fall ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.58).
- Joseph Fielding Smith again: "Those who live lives of wickedness **may also be heirs of salvation**, that is, they too **shall be redeemed from death and from hell eventually**" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.2, p.133).

12. The Bible teaches that salvation is only for those who trust in Christ.

John uses the word "believe" at least 55 times in his gospel, including the following references to salvation:

- "He who hears my word and **believes** Him who sent Me has eternal life and **does not** come into judgement" (Jn. 5:24).
- "Every one who beholds the Son, and **believes** in Him, may **have** eternal life, and I myself **will raise him up** on the last day" (Jn. 6:40).
- "As many as **received** Him, to them He **gave** the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** on His name" (Jn. 1:12).

- "He who **believes has eternal life**" (Jn. 6:47).
- "He who **believes in the Son has eternal life**" (John 3:36).
- "Whoever **believes** may in Him have eternal life" (Jn. 3:15).
- "Whoever **believes in Him** should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

In the sense that the apostle John used the Greek word for believe, he did not mean mere intellectual ascension, but **placing our total trust in Jesus for salvation**. That is why, in the same context, Jesus used other verbs to indicate a **definite action on the believer's part**:

- ""Whoever **drinks** of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (Jn. 4:14).
- "He who **eats** my flesh and **drinks** my blood has eternal life" (Jn. 5:54).
- "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may **eat** of it and not die" (Jn. 6:50).
- "Unless you **eat** of the flesh of the Son of Man and **drink** of His blood you have no life in yourselves" (Jn. 6:53).
- "This is eternal life, that they may **know** Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:2).

13. The Mormon church teaches that the dead outside of Christ can get to heaven (albeit the terrestrial kingdom) **by proxy baptism**. Mormons believe that there is a "paradise" or spirit world where all will go after death. In this spirit world, there are missionaries who give people one more chance to accept or reject the message of Mormonism. If one accepts, they are baptized by proxy into the church here on earth. This ceremony is performed in one of the LDS temples and is the primary reason why Mormons research and keep genealogical records ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) section 128).

- "And the chosen messengers went forth to declare...Thus was the **gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets**. These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins...and all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves...and **so it was made known among the dead**" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 138:31-35).
- "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to **seek after our dead**...Those saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at **peril of their own salvation**" (Joseph Smith, in [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.356, 196).
- "These are the principles in relation to the dead and the living...**their**

salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation...they without us cannot be made perfect---neither can we without our dead be made perfect...there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children...it is **baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 128:15,18).**

This doctrine is derived from one verse in the Bible (1 Cor. 15:29) where Paul refers to a fringe group practicing baptism for the dead. Even the [Encyclopedia of Mormonism](#) (published by the LDS church) admits: "He [Paul] refers to a practice of vicarious baptism, a practice for which we have **no other evidence** in the Pauline or other New Testament or early Christian writings", and also agrees with the interpretation that it is not a doctrine Paul advocates: "Paul clearly refers to a distinct group within the Church, a group that he accuses of inconsistency between ritual and doctrine".

14. The Bible teaches that this life is our only chance to receive Christ.

- "It is appointed for men to **die once**, and after this comes judgement" (Heb. 9:27).
- "An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, those who committed the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, **those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement**" (Jn. 5:28-29).
- "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him**" (John 3:36).

Mormons may ask 'then what does 1 Cor. 15:29 mean?'

- "Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?" (1 Cor. 15:29).

This verse must be understood in the context of the whole passage. Paul raises the subject of baptism in the context of expressing his concern about party factions among the Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14-17). Rather than endorsing baptism for the dead, Paul associates it with a group (perhaps the Marchionite sect) whom he has already identified (15:12) as being in deep error. He is saying that even this group, who deny the resurrection, are baptizing for the dead in anticipation of resurrection.

The impersonal manner in which Paul refers to practitioners of proxy baptism also indicates he is not endorsing the practice: "what will **those** do who are baptized for the dead...why then are **they** baptized for **them**?" The impersonal 'they' contrasts

markedly with the way Paul addresses believers in the same chapter, as 'you' (v. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 14, 17, 31, 34, 36, 51, 58), or 'we', or 'us' (15: 3, 15, 19, 30, 32, 49, 51, 52). In the context of 15:29, 'they' refers to the ones who are denying the resurrection, the ones the entire passage is written to refute (15:12).

This is exactly the understanding of the text held by the early Christian writer Tertullian. Writing about A.D. 180, he makes this comment on 1 Cor. 15:29 — "His [Paul's] only aim in alluding to it was that he might all the more firmly insist upon the resurrection of the body, in proportion as they who were vainly baptized for the dead resorted to the practice from their belief of such a resurrection". The apostle Peter accurately predicted that Paul's words would be misinterpreted and misconstrued by some:

- "Our beloved brother Paul...wrote to you, as also in all his letters...in which there are **some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

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Biblical Terms Redefined by Mormons

Mormons often use common terms that to them have completely different meanings than those used in the Bible or by orthodox Christian churches. Mormons may say they believe in "Jesus Christ," trust in the "scriptures," believe they are "saved by grace," and have been "born-again". They will talk about "eternal life" and things like "heaven," but they rarely explain what they mean when they use such terminology.

Holding back information is especially a problem with Mormons in the mission field. It is not uncommon for Mormon missionaries to purposely refrain from discussing doctrines which clearly separate Mormonism from the usual perception of Christianity. They are well aware that to do otherwise would risk any chance of a return visit. In many foreign countries the local population is at a severe disadvantage. Very few books are printed in their native language which critically examine LDS teachings. In many areas they do not even have a translated set of the standard works. At best they may have a copy of the Book of Mormon (or selections). Since the Book of Mormon does not reflect modern LDS teaching on many critical issues, this only adds to the deception ¹⁰.

Here is an alphabetical list of some of the more important terms and their meanings to a Mormon:

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD: This is called the lesser priesthood, and is usually held by young men starting at the age of 12 to the age of about 18. It is also held for a short time by men who have just become members.

AFTERLIFE: The Mormon afterlife is divided up into four levels. From the lowest to the highest they are: hell, and then three levels of heaven: the telestial, the terrestrial, and the place where God dwells, the celestial (also called the kingdom of God). The celestial is also divided, the highest level being "exaltation," or becoming a God.

APOSTLES: The Mormon Church claims to have the same organization as the primitive church that Jesus set up. They also have twelve apostles and sometimes use this as a proof of their divine appointment as the one true church. But they actually have fifteen or more most of the time. The general practice has been for a new president, who is also an apostle, to appoint counselors from the Quorum of the Twelve; then the openings left by the president and his counselors are filled, resulting in a total of fifteen.

CELESTIAL KINGDOM: See Heaven.

ELOHIM: The name of God the Father.

EXALTATION: This is becoming a God in the highest level of the celestial kingdom.

ETERNAL PROGRESSION: The teaching that each of us has the potential to become a God just like God the Father did. He was once a man capable of physical death, was resurrected and progressed to become a God. We can take a similar path and get all the power, glory, dominion, and knowledge the Father and Jesus Christ has. We then will be able to procreate spirit children who will worship us as we do God the Father.

GOD: Usually means God the Father. He was once a man like us capable of physical death and he progressed until he became a God. He has a body of flesh and bones, but no blood. Within Mormonism, Gods, angels, people and devils all have the same nature or substance but are at different stages along the line of progression to Godhood.

GRACE - The Mormon concept of grace means making oneself worthy of the grace of God by doing good works in the church, temple, and community.

HEAVEN-The Mormon church teaches there are three levels of heaven (three "degrees of glory"):

- **Telestial** - where unbelievers go
- **Terrestrial** - for religious people who aren't Mormons and for Mormons who have not met the requirements of the
- **Celestial** - for Mormons who have kept **ALL** of the laws and ordinances of their church. What will the celestial heaven (kingdom) supposedly be like for a good Mormon? He will be a god, he will rule over a planet with his wives and spirit children.

HELL: A place of torment from which the worst of sinners are resurrected (if they repent) into the Telestial kingdom; only a limited number remain in hell forever, - the devil and the demons and apostates who consciously reject and work against Mormonism.

HOLY GHOST: The third member of the Godhead, a personage of spirit, unlike the Father and Son who have bodies of flesh and bones.

JEHOVAH: The pre-incarnate name for Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST: The spirit of Jesus Christ was the first spirit born to God the Father and his wife (Heavenly Mother). He progressed to become a God under the Father. (The Father is also the literal father of Jesus' body in the exact same way we were begotten by our earthly parents.) He now has a body of flesh and bones, but no blood. He is the spirit brother of Satan whose spirit was procreated in the same way as Jesus'. To Mormons, even the atonement of his shed blood is not enough to provide forgiveness of sin and bring eternal life. Stripped of his Deity and demoted to a partial Savior, the Jesus of Mormonism has been robbed of his power and authority. Not only is the Mormon Jesus one who had struggled to achieve his own

salvation, he also failed to establish his church. Both in Jerusalem and in the America's where Jesus was supposed to have visited, he attempted to build a group of followers. But in each case, truth was overcome by the alleged early church apostasy into false teaching.

MARRIAGE: The Mormon Church teaches two types of marriage. One ends at death. The other is for "time and eternity." If the couple is married in a Mormon temple by someone with authority it is believed they will stay married in the next life. This kind of marriage is needed if they are to progress, not only as husband and wife, but as God and Goddess.

MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD: The higher of two categories of ministry in the LDS Church, assigned primarily to seasoned members over the age of 18, males only.

POLYGAMY: The practice of men having more than one wife was started by Joseph Smith in the early/mid 1830's and ostensibly ended in 1890. It is not now sanctioned by the LDS church headquartered in Salt Lake City. Members found practicing it are excommunicated. While the practice was ended, the revelation teaching it is still in Mormon scripture ([Doctrine & Covenants](#) 132). Some Mormon splinter groups believe the teaching was for eternity and still practice it. These modern-day polygamists (called fundamentalists) number in the 30,000-50,000 range.

PRE-EXISTENCE: The Mormon teaching that our spirits (Mormons and non-Mormons) were procreated in a premortal life by God the Father and our Mother in Heaven, that our spirits were born and raised to maturity before coming to earth to obtain physical bodies, and that the spirit of Jesus Christ was the first one born to our Heavenly parents.

PRIESTHOOD: A category of ministry in the LDS Church open to all worthy males 12 years of age or older, empowering them to act in God's name. Non-Mormons cannot hold the priesthood, hence they have no authority. Men of African descent have only recently (by special correction of the original revelations) been allowed to hold these offices.

PROPHET: The top leader of the Mormon Church is considered not only a prophet but is also a seer and revelator. He has the title "president." He is the only one who can speak for the whole church and receive new revelation for the whole church. When the current prophet dies, the most senior (time as an apostle, not age) of the twelve apostles, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, becomes the new president. He can appoint counselors, who receive their authority from him.

SALVATION: A word that Mormons qualify in one of three ways: unconditional or general salvation is simply resurrection from the dead, granted to all through Christ's atonement; conditional or individual salvation involves entering the celestial kingdom through works of Mormonism; full salvation means exaltation to become a God as a result of temple ceremonies and other works. The word 'salvation' can have a two-fold meaning: a) forgiveness of sins and b) universal resurrection:

- "There will be a General Salvation for all in the sense in which that term is

generally used, but salvation, **meaning resurrection**, is not exaltation" (Stephen L. Richards, Contributions of Joseph Smith, LDS tract, p.5).

- "All men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part, **meaning they are resurrected**" (Bruce McConkie, What Mormons Think of Christ", LDS tract, p.28).

The Mormons have several different levels of "salvation".

- **General salvation**- in Mormon theology, the death of Christ ransoms men from the effects of the fall (Mormon Doctrine, p.62), except for a few sons of perdition who fell with Lucifer. Thus, all mankind will eventually receive general salvation because all men will be resurrected.
- **Individual salvation** - to obtain individual salvation, the standards set forth by the Mormon church must be met. This comes by grace plus baptism plus works.
- **Exaltation** - different degrees of exaltation
- **Eternal life** on the other hand is reserved for the elite few who qualify and are found worthy of this "honor" or "reward" and who will move on to be "exalted." This salvation is in fact the personal "exaltation" or the fast track of the "eternal progression" process in attaining your own self-made status of godhood in order to people your own planet.

SATAN: One of the spirit children of God. As a consequence of their rebellion Satan and his angels cannot have mortal bodies - hence cannot progress.

SCRIPTURES: The Mormon Church has four documents it calls canonized scriptures: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

SON OF GOD: Along with Jesus Christ, all of us are viewed as the children of God, his literal spirit children. This makes us all - Mormons, non-Mormons, Jesus Christ and Satan - spirit brothers.

SPIRITS: Nonmaterial beings allegedly procreated in the pre-existence by God the Father and his wife. Jesus Christ, and even we ourselves, were supposedly born and raised to maturity as spirits before coming into bodies on this earth. The spirit of Satan was also procreated in this way. This makes Satan and Jesus Christ spirit brothers. Jesus selected a righteous path; Satan selected the opposite.

STANDARD WORKS: The four canonized scriptures (see Scripture above) used by the Mormon Church are called the Standard Works.

TEMPLE: One of about four dozen special (for LDS) buildings around the world in which sacred (to LDS) ceremonies are performed for the living and the dead; off limits to nonmembers and even to Mormons who lack a "temple recommend" from their leaders. Only about 20% of the Mormons qualify to go.

TRINITY: This word is used by Christians to summarize the Biblical teaching that within the one true God is three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. They share the same nature or substance so that there are not three

Gods, but three persons in the one God. Mormons say they also believe in the Trinitarian concept of God. But really what they mean are that God the Father is a God, God the Son is another God, and God the Holy Ghost is a third God and they are "one God" because they are "one in purpose." Mormons often have an incorrect understanding of what Christians mean by the "Trinity." They say Christians believe that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one person (i.e., Monophysitism) or that God shows himself as the Father or the Son or the Holy Ghost (i.e. Modalism).

VIRGIN BIRTH: A concept negated by the view that God, a resurrected man with flesh and bones according to Mormon teachings, literally fathered Jesus in the flesh in the same way in which earthly men father their children. Despite the documented position of previous Mormon prophets, presidents, and apostles about the nature of Christ's conception, modern LDS apologists maintain that "Christ was born of a virgin". How can they? By changing the definition of the word "virgin". The reasoning goes like this: since Mary had sexual relations with an immortal man, not a mortal man, the phrase "virgin birth" still applies.

WORD OF WISDOM: The name for the Mormon Church's teaching requiring abstinence from tobacco, alcohol, and hot drinks (tea and coffee).

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The Mormon Test for Truthfulness

Mormons often challenge people to **pray with sincerity** concerning the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, citing a verse in its closing book:

- "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall **ask with a sincere heart**, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" ([Moroni 10:4](#)).

Many sincere seekers fall for this ploy, being ignorant of the warnings set forth by the Bible. Nowhere does the Bible ever direct the believing Christian to take any religious book and pray about the truthfulness of its contents. While we are told to ask God for wisdom (James 1:5), the clear **Biblical directive** and pattern to follow includes more than this:

- "do not believe every spirit, but **test** the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John. 4:1).
- "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and **does not agree** with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim. 6:3-4).
- "**Test** yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5).
- "you put to the **test** those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false" (Rev. 2:2).
- "**Prove** all things, hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).
- The Apostle Paul knew the gospel he preached was true because Christ's resurrection was **historically verifiable** (1 Cor. 15:1-8). Is the Book of Mormon historically verifiable? [No](#).

Why is this the better method? Because **not every self-proclaimed prophet is from God**; many present a false gospel:

- "You are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a **different gospel**... even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to

you a gospel **contrary to what we have preached** to you, he is to be accursed!" (Gal. 1:6-8).

- "if one comes and preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or you receive a **different spirit** which you have not received, or a **different gospel** which you have not accepted... (2 Cor. 11:4).
- "Thus says the LORD of hosts, Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their **own imagination, not from the mouth of the LORD**" (Jer. 23:16).

How can we determine if a prophet is speaking from God? First, the prophecy must be **100% accurate**. Second, the Bible says to **use God's previous revelation** through Biblical authors as a standard of comparison, because no new revelation will contradict God's previous words:

- "If a prophet... arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, **"Let us go after other gods** (whom you have not known) and let us serve them [**i.e. contradicting the ten commandments**],' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet ...but that prophet ... shall be put to death" (Deut 13:1-5).
- "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, **if the thing does not come about or come true**, that is the thing which the LORD has NOT spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously" (Deut 18:22).
- "If anyone advocates a **different doctrine** and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim. 6:3-4).
- Paul commended the Bereans for objectively **investigating** the things he taught them: "Now these were more noble-minded...for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so**" (Acts 17:11).

Even **Mormon leaders** advocate investigation:

- "**convince us of our errors of doctrine**, if we have any, **by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God**, and we will be ever grateful for the information, and you will ever have the pleasing reflection that you have been instruments in the hands of God of redeeming your fellow beings from the darkness which you may see enveloping their minds." (Orson Pratt, [The Seer](#), p. 15-16, 1853).

Therefore, it is NOT BIBLICAL to pray about the Book of Mormon to determine its truthfulness; one must **TEST** what it has to say. **If it contradicts what God has already revealed, it fails.** If you have "gained a testimony of the Book of Mormon"

by praying Moroni 10:4, then you must seriously question whether or not you have been deceived.

Why should subjective feelings be suspected? Because we are sinful creatures and can be swayed by our emotions and sinful desires:

- "The heart of man is desperately wicked and cannot be trusted" (Jeremiah 17:9).
- "There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end is death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Should you pray whether to commit adultery or steal? Of course not, because the Bible already speaks out against such sins. God has already revealed His will regarding such matters, and no amount of prayer will change that fact. No matter how sincerely you may believe otherwise, to claim that God gave you permission to steal, or commit adultery proves that you did not hear from God (1 Tim 6:3-4; Deut. 13:1-2; Deut. 18:20-22; Jer. 23:16, 30-36; Zech. 13:2-3).

To believe that something is true merely **because you feel** it to be so or **because you are sincere** in your belief does not make it true ¹¹. Instead, the Bible warns that feelings can be deceptive and that the sincere truth-seeker must base decisions on more objective means. A standard Mormon response is to resort to the subjective. He insists that he knows the Book of Mormon is true because he has a '**burning in the bosom**'. God, he claims, has proved it to him in his heart, so it can't be untrue. He may also claim that to challenge him in this way only makes him stronger in this faith. A "burning in the bosom," no matter how sincere, is no proof of historicity or authority. If evidence goes against the Book of Mormon to prove it false, then to ignore or avoid that evidence is not sincere faith but rather dishonesty and deceitfulness.

The test of Moroni 10:4 is a **trick**. When you are challenged, you must accept Book of Mormon as true or your integrity is placed under suspicion. If you accept the challenge (even though unbiblical) but conclude that the Book of Mormon is not from God, Mormons will say that you either did not have a sincere heart, real intent, or genuine faith; otherwise the test would have revealed positive results. According to Mormon thinking, it is not possible for their book to be wrong, so you must be wrong.

Mormons may also say that the Book of Mormon is latter-day revelation from God that supercedes the authority of the Bible. This cannot be true because **written, inerrant, authoritative revelation ended with Jesus and his apostles:**

- The apostles spoke on God's behalf: "Paul, according to the wisdom given

him, **wrote** to you, as **also in all his letters**, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also **the rest of the scriptures...**" (2 Peter 3:15-16). "You should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the **commandment of the Lord by your apostles**" (2 Peter 3:2).

- But the Apostle Paul warned the Galatian church: "if anyone should preach to you a gospel **contrary to that which we preached**, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9).
- "**Do not add** to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar" (Prov. 30:6).
- "You **shall not add** to the word which I am commanding you, **nor take away** from it" (Deut. 4:2).
- "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of **this book: if anyone adds to them**, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and **if anyone takes away from the words of the book** of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life" (Rev. 22:18-19).

This is the standard that must be used. If you **investigate** carefully the differences between Mormon doctrine and orthodox Christian doctrine, and compare Mormon 'scriptures' with the Bible, you will come to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon and Mormonism are not from God.

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Other Problems With Mormonism

In addition to the material I have covered on differences between Mormon doctrine and orthodox Christian doctrine, there are many other problems with Mormonism. Even this list is not exhaustive, but **these topics should be investigated by anyone who might be considering joining the LDS church.**

A. Questions about the Book of Mormon

- total lack of archeological support
- contradictions with other LDS scriptures
- abundant plagarism of the KJV Bible
- key changes were made to the original version
- curious similarities to contemporaneous works of fiction
- confessions and defections of the other witnesses

B. Questions about Joseph Smith's credibility:

- comparisons of [himself](#) to Jesus
- contradictions in accounts of his first vision
- his suspicious past and character
- false prophecies he made
- both sides of the story of his 'martydom' and early LDS persecution
- Smith's reliability as a translator - the failed test of the Book of Abraham
- Smith's 'inspired' version of the Bible

C. Questions about the integrity of other Mormon Prophets

- major changes in Mormon doctrine and revelation
- polygamy, role of blacks, blood atonement
- deceptions by the LDS church
- changes in prophecy
- secret ceremonies and masonry

Others are better qualified to comprehensively address these issue so I will simply point to other sources. Much useful material can be found on the Internet and a list of

the sites that I have found most useful is given below.

[Berean Christian Ministries](#) -
[Christian Apologetic and Research Ministry](#) -
[Christian Answers](#) -
[Mormonism Research Ministry](#) -
[Probe Ministries](#) -
[Reason](#) -
[Saints Alive](#) -
[Trust the Truth](#) -
[Utah Lighthouse Organization](#) -
[Watchman Ministries](#) -
[Word for the Weary](#) -

The various authors of these sites contributed to about 10-15% of the material I have compiled. I acknowledge them and apologize for places in which I have inadvertently neglected to specifically credit them.

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Statements made by Joseph Smith about himself

- "I have **more to boast** of than ever **any** man had. I am the **only man** that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam...Neither Paul, John, Peter, **nor Jesus** ever did it. **I boast that no man ever did such a work as I.** The followers of Jesus ran away from Him, but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet" ([History of the Church](#), vol. 6, p.408-409).
- "If you tell them that God made the world out of something, they will call you a fool. But **I am learned, and know more than all the world put together**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.350-352).
- "...how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age...should be thought **a character of sufficient importance** to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the **most bitter persecution and reviling.** But strange or not, so it was...I have thought since that **I felt much like Paul**" (from [Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith-History](#) 1:23-24).
- "God made Aaron to be the mouthpiece for the children of Israel, and **He will make me be god to you in His stead...**and if you don't like it, you must lump it!" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.363).
- "**I will prove that the world is wrong**, by showing what God is...God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the **great secret...**I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea**, and take away the veil, so that you may see" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.345)

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The Mormon Church Claims to Receive Modern-day Revelation

The Mormon church claims that the Bible has been corrupted and does not contain the "fullness of the gospel". Therefore additional (Latter-Day) revelation was and is necessary:

- Mormon scriptures state: "[when] the book [the Bible] proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew...it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record" ([1 Nephi 13:24](#)), but that afterwards "thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church...after **the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church**, that there are **many plain and precious things taken away from the book**, which is the book of the Lamb of God. And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles" ([Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:26,28](#)). See also [Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.3, p.190-191.
- Joseph Smith claimed: "it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been **taken from the Bible, or lost** before it was compiled" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.10); "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. **Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 327).
- Orson Pratt's stated: "who, in his right mind, could for one moment, suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? **No one can tell whether even one verse of either the Old or New Testament conveys the ideas of the original author**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p. 28).

Mormons claim additional revelation comes through their scriptures:

- Joseph Smith stated: "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was **more correct than any book on earth**, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding its precepts, **than by any other book**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.194).
- Apologist Bruce McConkie states: The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity - manuscripts which passed through the

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hands of **uninspired** men who changed many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. Deletions were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been lost. As a consequence, **those who rely upon it [the Bible] alone stumble and are confused...** ([The Ensign](#), December 1985, p 55).

Mormons claim additional revelation came (and still comes) through their Prophets and Leaders. This claim makes their role **very different from that of leaders in orthodox Christian churches.**

- Joseph Smith made very clear [statements](#) about his importance in God's plan: Neither Paul, John, Peter, **nor Jesus** ever did it. **I boast that no man ever did such a work as I**" ([History of the Church](#), vol. 6, p.408-409).
- President and prophet Ezra Taft Benson stated: "...**the [Living] Prophet does not have to say 'Thus saith the Lord' to give us scripture**" (Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets, BYU Devotional, Feb 26, 1980, p.3,6).
- Orson Pratt explains that not all prophecy was published in the "Standard Works": "Now I want to prophecy a little...**I want to prophecy** that all men and women who oppose the revelation which God has given in relation to polygamy will find themselves in darkness..." ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 17, p.224-225).
- Brigham Young said: "**Joseph Smith in his lifetime did not receive every thing** connected with the doctrine of redemption" (Millennial Star, vol.6, p.121).
- Brigham Young also said: "I have **never** yet **preached a sermon** and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not **call Scripture** ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 13, p.95).
- F.D. Richards confirms this: "Concerning the doctrine that Adam is our Father and God...the prophet and Apostle **Brigham has declared it, and that is the word of the Lord**" ([Millennial Star](#), August 26, 1854, vol.16, p.534).
- Mormon Edward W. Tullidge wrote: "When **Brigham Young proclaimed** to the nations that Adam was our Father and God...**he made the most important revelation ever oracled to the race** since the days of Adam himself" (The Women of Mormondom, p.79,179,196-197, 1877).
- Mormon A.F. McDonald commented: "**if the President makes a statement it is not our prerogative to dispute it...**when I first heard the doctrine of Adam being our Father and God, I was favorably impressed---enjoyed and **hailed it as a new Revelation**" (Minutes of the School of Prophets, Provo, UT, 1868-1871, p.38-39).
- John Nuttall recorded this: "Prest **Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said...Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior)** who is the heir of the family is Father Adam's first begotten in the spirit world"

(Wednesday Feb. 7, 1877, Journal of John Nuttall, vol.1, p.18-21).

- An official and widely distributed LDS document states: "**When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done.** When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy" (Ward teachers message for June, 1945).
- President Heber C. Kimball said: "But if you are told by your leader to do a thing, do it. None of your business whether it is right or wrong" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.6, p.32).
- A letter from the First Presidency (Presidents Benson, Hinckley, and Monson) to all members of the Church states: "The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical passage is not by comparing different texts [in the Bible], but by comparison with the Book of Mormon and **modern-day revelations** [through them]". ([Church News](#), June 20, 1992, page 3, letter dated May 22, 1992).
- Ezra Taft Benson stated: "**the Living Prophet...is more vital to us than the Standard Works** [Bible, Book of Mormon, etc.]...The living Prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet [the Old Testament Prophets]" (Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets, BYU Devotional, Feb 26, 1980, p.3,6).

In contrast, The Bible claims that written, inerrant, authoritative revelation ended with Jesus and his apostles:

- "You should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the **commandment of the Lord by your apostles**" (2 Peter 3:2).
- "Paul, according to the wisdom given him, **wrote** to you, as **also in all his letters**, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also **the rest of the scriptures...**" (2 Peter 3:15-16).
- "Do **not add to His words** Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar" (Prov. 30:6).
- "You shall **not add to the word** which I am commanding you, **nor take away from it**" (Deut. 4:2).
- "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of **this book: if anyone adds to them**, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and **if anyone takes away from the words of the book** of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life..." (Rev. 22:18-19).

Why is this so important? Because false teachers will inevitably come with a different gospel:

- The apostle Paul warns of "**another Jesus** whom we have not preached... a **different spirit** which you have not received, or a **different gospel** which you

have not accepted" (2 Cor. 11:4).

- Paul also warns: "But even **if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel** other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:8).

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Mormon objections to deriving LDS doctrine from sources other than the 'Standard Works'

Mormons may object to the citation of works such as [Journal of Discourses](#) and [Mormon Doctrine](#) when discussing LDS doctrine. LDS doctrine, they argue should be derived only from the 'Standard Works'. However, there are several problems with this objection:

1. Very little Mormon doctrine is, in fact, derived from the Book of Mormon; rather, most comes from 'revelations' given to Joseph Smith in [Doctrine & Covenants](#). In each section of my material, and to substantiate every major doctrine discussed, I have directly quoted many official LDS sources including the 'Standard Works'.
2. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young claimed to speak authoritatively from God. The [Journal of Discourses](#) gives a quite accurate account of sermons delivered by early leaders, particularly Brigham Young. The sermons were transcribed and recorded by official church transcribers and checked by the speakers for accuracy. Many of Smith's sermons were included in the original 'Standard Works' but were later [removed](#) by LDS officials. In almost all cases, independent verification of the statements can be found in other official church publications, particularly periodicals.

Mormons try to make a **distinction between times when their leaders speak in an official, prophetic capacity (on behalf of God) and when they speak in a non-prophetic capacity**. The latter, they argue, is where anti-Mormon writers take non-official doctrine out of context. However, this line of reasoning ignores some very bold and **unique claims made by LDS founders and leaders** about the authority with which they speak.

- Joseph Smith stated: "God made Aaron to be the mouthpiece for the children of Israel, and **He will make me be god to you in His stead**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.363).
- Brigham Young said: "I have **never yet preached a sermon** and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not **call Scripture** ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 13, p.95).
- F.D. Richards confirms this: "the prophet and Apostle **Brigham has declared**

it [the Adam-God doctrine], **and that is the word of the Lord**" ([Millennial Star](#), August 26, 1854, vol.16, p.534).

- **"if the President makes a statement it is not our prerogative to dispute it"** (Minutes of the School of Prophets, Provo, UT, 1868-1871, p.38-39).
- Official LDS teaching documents state: **"When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done.** When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy" (Ward teachers message, June 1945).
- A letter from the First Presidency (Presidents Benson, Hinckley, and Monson) to all members of the Church states: "The most reliable way to measure the accuracy of any biblical passage is not by comparing different texts [in the Bible], but by comparison with the Book of Mormon and **modern-day revelations** [through them]". ([Church News](#), June 20, 1992, page 3, letter dated May 22, 1992).
- Ezra Taft Benson stated: **"the Living Prophet...is more vital to us than the Standard Works** [Bible, Book of Mormon, etc.]...The living Prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet [an Old Testament Prophet]"..."Keep your eye on the President of the Church. If he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it" (Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets, BYU Devotional, Feb 26, 1980, p.3,6).
- Joseph Fielding Smith declared that at **every General Conference of the church, the speakers are giving forth scripture that is equal** to anything in the Bible or Book of Mormon.

To Mormons, the Living Prophet is the first line of authority. This becomes even more important when one considers that the official LDS position on the Bible (contained in their Articles of Faith) diminishes the [Bible's authority](#). The current LDS prophet can overturn any prior teaching of a past prophet. Brigham Young said that, when compared to the Living Prophet, the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the 'Standard Works' of the Church were nothing to him..."they do not convey the word of God as does the prophet".

The founders and leaders of the LDS church obviously believed the doctrines they declared, so how would we know which of those doctrines are now truthful and which are not? **Mormon leaders incorrectly assume that it is a small thing to change or add to a previous revelation** from God. Throughout its text, the Bible warns about this:

- "You shall **not add to the word** which I am commanding you, **nor take away from it**" (Deut. 4:2).
- "Do **not add to His words** Or He [God] will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar" (Prov. 30:6).

- "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of **this book: if anyone adds to them**, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and **if anyone takes away from the words of the book** of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life..." (Rev. 22:18-19).

The Bible warns of listening to **false** prophets:

- "do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John. 4:1).
- "If anyone **advocates a different doctrine** and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim. 6:3-4).

And the Bible makes it very clear **how to test** whether a prophet is speaking from God or not because many false prophets will try to speak for God:

- "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, **if the thing does not come about or come true**, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously" (Deut 18:22).
- "But the prophet who speaks a word **presumptuously in My name** which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'" (Deut 18:20).
- "If a prophet... arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, **"Let us go after other gods** (whom you have not known) and let us serve them [**thereby contradicting the ten commandments**],' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet ...but that prophet ... shall be put to death" (Deut 13:1-5).
- "Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel **contrary to what we have preached** to you, let him be accursed!" (Gal. 1:6-8).
- "if one comes and preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or you receive a **different spirit** which you have not received, or a **different gospel** which you have not accepted... (2 Cor. 11:4).

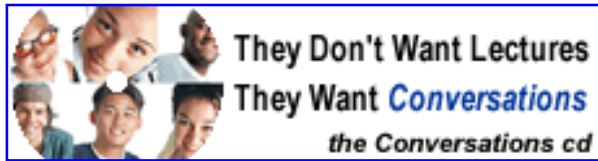
In summary, the Bible states that a false prophet can be recognized if: 1) if his prophecies **do not come true 100% of the time**, 2) if his prophecy **contradicts a previous revelation** or command given by God. In either case, the prophet is to be put to death. It should be very clear to the careful student of Mormonism that LDS prophets, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young in particular, do not meet either these criteria: 1) the [Doctrine & Covenants](#) contain verifiably false prophecies by Joseph Smith¹⁵, 2) their doctrines and teachings clearly contradict the Bible.

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A Respectful Word to Mormons

If you are a Mormon, you may take offense at some of my materials; I [used to be](#) a Mormon. It is not my intention to slander you or your beliefs. But since you probably consider yourself to be a 'believer', **consider the warnings to believers** in the Bible:

- "do not believe every spirit, but **test** the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John. 4:1).
- "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim. 6:3-4).
- "**Test** yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5).
- "you put to the **test** those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false" (Rev. 2:2).
- "**Prove** all things, hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess 5:21).

Listen also to the **admonitions of your own leaders**:

- "Convince us of our errors of doctrine if we have any, by reason, by logical arguments, or by the word of God, and **we will be ever grateful** for the information, and you will ever have the pleasing reflection that you have been instruments in the hands of God of redeeming your fellow beings from the darkness which you may see enveloping their minds." (Orson Pratt, [The Seer](#), p. 15-16, 1853).
- "If Joseph Smith was a deceiver who willfully attempted to mislead the people, then **he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted and his doctrines shown to be false**, for the doctrines of an impostor cannot be made to harmonize in all particulars with divine truth" (Joseph Fielding Smith, [Doctrines of Salvation](#), 1:188).

As I've mentioned before, no one but God should presume to tell you whether or not you are a Christian. But **you cannot call yourself a Mormon if you do not believe the fundamental doctrines taught by the LDS church**. Likewise, you cannot expect to be considered a Christian **if you do not believe even the same basic truths that Christians believe** (those shared by all orthodox denominations).

Certainly, LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie and LDS President Gordon Hinckley wouldn't agree with you:

- McConkie wrote: "virtually all the **millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 269).
- Hinckley stated: "The traditional Christ of whom they [non-Mormons] speak is **not the Christ** of whom I speak" (LDS Church News Week 6/20/98, p.7).

This is just one of [many such statements](#) by nearly all of the LDS presidents, including Joseph Smith. **LDS teachings differ radically from orthodox Christian doctrine on most major issues:** go back and read section 3 of my materials to prove this to yourself. If you are in the Mormon church, you will be exposed to these unorthodox doctrines sooner or later, overtly or subtly, and you will inevitably begin to accept them, even if you do not now.

Are the sermons, texts, and books that I have quoted simply aberrant teachings by obscure Mormon leaders, or transitional teachings that were never considered official LDS doctrine or revelation? You are deceiving yourself if you believe this. The large majority of the material that I quote was written or stated by LDS Prophets, Presidents, and General Authorities and transcribed by LDS officials. As I've [documented](#), your church makes some very bold and unique claims about the authority of its leaders. No one in orthodox Christianity has been recognized to have this type of authority since Jesus and his [apostles](#).

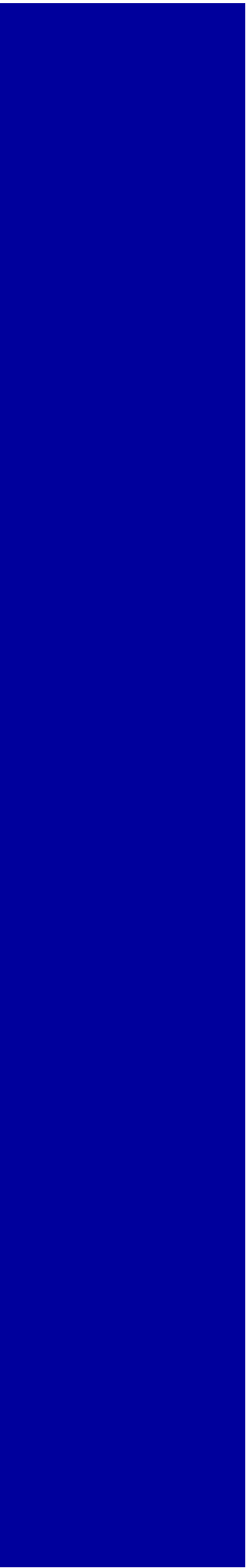
Furthermore, if the founders and leaders of the LDS church taught doctrine that was contrary to God's previous revelation in the Bible, **how can they have been led by God** to receive other 'truthful' revelation from Him?' How can you know which are truthful and which are not?. This takes you back to the Biblical mandate (at the top of this page) to **investigate on your own**. You must use materials other than (or at least in addition to) those given to you by the LDS church. Above all, use the Bible (Acts 17:11); the evidence for its accuracy and reliability is overwhelming¹⁶.

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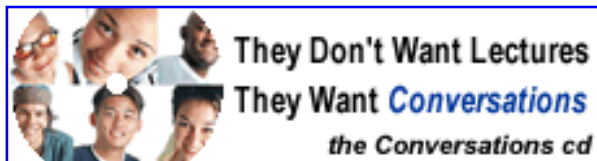
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'Mormon' or 'Christian'?

The LDS church has recently exerted great effort to portray itself as a Christian denomination:

- All editions of the Book of Mormon were simply entitled the 'Book of Mormon' until 1982 when the subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" was **added**.
- In 1995 the words 'Jesus Christ' on the official letterhead of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were **enlarged** until they were three times the size of the rest of the text.
- In Salt Lake City's Temple Square, the guides' patter, once full of proud references to Smith, is now almost entirely Christological. "We **talk about Christ a lot more than we used to**," says editor of the temple magazine. "We want to show the converts we are Christians".
- A number of recent LDS books such as Stephen E. Robinson's '[Are Mormons Christian](#)'? attempt to make Mormonism and Christianity appear to be the same.
- The official name of the LDS Church has not always contained the name of 'Jesus Christ'. At its inception on April 6, 1830 until May 3, 1834, the name of '**Church of Christ**' was adopted. But from May 3, 1834 to April 25, 1838, the name '**The Church of the Latter Day Saints**' was adopted by unanimous vote at a conference of Elders moderated by Joseph Smith, Jr. (The Evening and Morning Star, 2(20): 160, May 1834; [History of the Church](#) 2:62). On April 26, 1838 the name was changed to '**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**' as named in a 'revelation' ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 115:3) to Smith.

Yet LDS leaders seem to fall on both sides of this issue. For example, President Hinckley says:

- "Am I Christian? Of course I am. I believe in Christ. I talk of Christ. I pray through Christ. I'm trying to follow Him and live His gospel in my life" (LDS Church News, 6/28/98).
- However, in reference to whether he believes 'in the traditional Christ' Hinckley responds: "No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they [non-

Mormons] speak is not the Christ of whom I speak. For the Christ of whom I speak has been revealed in this the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. He together with His Father, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the year 1820, and when Joseph left the grove that day, he knew more of the nature of God than all the learned ministers of the gospel of the ages" (LDS Church News Week 6/20/98, p.7).

Of course, early Mormon prophets and leaders made VERY clear statements explaining that their church was NOT a Christian denomination (see: [The Only True Church?](#)). **They claimed that there was a total apostasy of all Christendom after the death of the original apostles.** Here are just a few quotes:

- Joseph Smith stated: "This [LDS] Church...the **only true and living church** upon the face of the whole earth" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 1:30). "What is it that inspires **professors of Christianity** generally with a hope of salvation? It is that smooth, sophisticated influence of the devil, by which he deceives the whole world" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.270);
- [Brigham Young](#) stated: "Should you ask why we differ from other Christians, as they are called, it is simply because **they are not Christians as the New Testament defines Christianity**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 10:230);
- [Apostle Orson Pratt](#) proclaimed: "Both **Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the 'whore of Babylon'** whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornications and wickedness. Any person who shall be so corrupt as to receive a holy ordinance of the Gospel from the ministers of any of these **apostate churches** will be **sent down to hell with them**, unless they repent" ([The Seer](#), p. 255).
- [Apostle Bruce McConkie](#) is also very clear: "Apostasy was universal...And this **darkness still prevails** except among those who have come to a knowledge of the restored gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol 3, p.265). "Virtually all the millions of **apostate Christendom** have abased themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ" (LDS Apostle Bruce McConkie, in [Mormon Doctrine](#), p.269).
- President Ezra Taft Benson said: "This is **not just another Church**. This is **not just one of a family of Christian churches**. This is the Church and kingdom of God, **the only true Church** upon the face of the earth..." (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.164-165).

The Mormon response to those who question whether they are Christians is to accuse them of being contentious and unloving. Mormons will proudly claim that the LDS church never criticizes other beliefs and therefore no one should criticize them. Based on the statements above, this obviously isn't true; the Mormon reaction is merely **feigned indignation** or reflects an ignorance of statements made by their own

leaders.

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Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about God

	Mormon Teaching	Biblical Teaching
One God	God is only one of many gods ¹	There is only one God ²
The Trinity	Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct Gods ³	There is one God with three distinct persons in the godhead ⁴
Changeable	God was once a man who achieved godhood ⁵	God is unchangeable, has always been, will always be God ⁶
Essence	God has flesh and bones ⁷	God is a Spirit, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent ⁸
Marital Status	God has eternal wives ⁹	God stands alone as God and Creator ¹⁰
Adam	Adam was the God of this world ¹¹	Adam was only a created man ¹²

(click on any reference number to show detailed documentation of each statement in the lower frame)

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References: Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about God

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section, "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. The Mormon church teaches that "God is only one of many gods", because human beings can progress to become gods and goddesses in the celestial kingdom (see: [Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#) , pp.28, 51-53).

- Mormon founder [Joseph Smith](#) describes the creation of the earth: "And they (the **Gods**) said, 'Let there be light'...And the **Gods** pronounced the dry land...And the **Gods** organized the earth...And the **Gods** planted a garden in Eden" ([Pearl of Great Price, Abraham](#) 4:3,10,25; 5:8). A reference to a plurality of 'Gods' occurs at least **43 times** in the book of [Abraham](#).
- According to [Joseph Smith](#): "The doctrine of a **plurality of Gods** is prominent in the Bible. The heads of the **Gods** appointed our God for us...you have got to learn how to be **Gods** yourselves...the same as all **Gods** have done before you" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.370-372, 346).
- Mormon Apostle and leading apologist [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Three separate personages---Father, Son, and Holy Ghost---comprise the Godhead...As **each of these persons is a God**, it is evident from this standpoint alone, that a **plurality of Gods** exists. To us...**these three are the only Gods** we worship" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.576-577).
- Mormon Apostle [Orson Pratt](#) wrote "there are **more gods** than there are particles of matter" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.2, p.345).
- Mormon Prophet [Brigham Young](#) wrote: "How many **Gods** there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not **Gods**" ([Journal of Discourses](#) v.7, p.333).

2. The Bible consistently declares that there now is, always has been, and will ever be only ONE God:

- "the Lord, He is God; there is **no other besides Him**" (Deut. 4:35).
- " I am the first, I am also the last and there is **no God besides Me**" (Is. 44:6, 48:12, 45:14,21-22).
- "there is **but one God**, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him" (1 Cor. 6:6).
- "I am God and there is **no other**; I am God and there is **no one like me**" (Is. 46:9).

- "...before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me!" (Is. 43:10).
- "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since he could swear by **no one greater**, He swore by Himself" (Heb. 6:13).
- "Thou **alone art the LORD**; thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it" (Neh. 9:6).
- there are **many** additional verses: including Isaiah chp. 45-49, 1 Tim. 1:17.

In some biblical passages, God does refer to Himself in the plural (Gen. 1:26, Is. 41:22-23), which orthodox Christians believe is consistent with the biblical concept of the [Trinity](#).

The Bible occasionally refers to 'gods', in two other contexts:

- i. In the context of denouncing pagan polytheism: "For even though there are **so-called gods** whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, **yet for us there is but one God**" (2 Cor. 8:5-6). See also: 2 Chron. 2: 5-6 and Is. 41:23. These passages are often misconstrued by Mormon missionaries to argue that the Bible is only talking about the God of this planet and not 'gods' of other worlds. However, the Bible makes no reference whatsoever to other actual 'gods' anywhere in the universe.
- ii. The Bible uses the word "Elohim" in a figurative way to refer to men carrying out a God-like function or holding God-like authority over others (Ex. 21:6; 22:8,9; Ps. 82:6). For example: "He [Aaron] shall be as a mouth for you, and you [Moses] **shall be as God** to him" (Ex. 4:16).

3. Mormon theology contends that Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct Gods. This teaching is related to the testimony of Joseph Smith, who in [one version](#) of his first vision, stated that he saw two separate personages (the Father and the Son) in the form of men:

- "When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other 'This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!'" ([Joseph Smith History](#) 1:17).

Other Mormon writers expound on the significance of this description:

- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "There are **three Gods**...separate in personality, united in purpose, in plan, and in all attributes of perfection" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.270).

- James Talmage states: "This [the Trinity] **cannot rationally be construed to mean** that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one in substance and person" ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.40)
- Heber C. Kimball stated: "The Holy Ghost is a **man**; he is **one of the sons** of our Father and our God" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.5, p.179).

4. The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is an established tenant of orthodox Christianity, having been stated in most of the recognized creeds. Based on the reconciliation of many different scriptures, all of which must be true simultaneously, God is described as the Trinity, one God with three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Although not succinctly stated in a single scripture text, this concept of God's nature is consistent with the entirety of the Bible. It asserts that three divine persons share the same essence (are one and the same God). They are all coequal, coeternal, and of the same nature. A few of the many relevant passages are given below:

Regarding God the Father, the Bible emphatically states:

- "The Lord is our God, the Lord is **one!**" (Deut. 6:4, Mark 12:29).
- " I am the first, I am also the last and there is **no God besides Me**" (Is. 44:6, 48:12, 45:14,21-22).
- "the Lord, He is God; there is **no other besides Him**" (Deut. 4:35).

Yet, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also identified with, and act as, God:

- "In Him [Jesus] all the **fulness of Deity** dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).
- "He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the **exact representation of His nature**" (Heb. 1:3).
- "But of the **Son** He [God] says, 'Thy Throne **O God** is forever and ever'" (Heb. 1:8).
- "Thomas answered [to Jesus] 'My Lord and **My God**'" (John 20:28).
- Jesus claimed: "I and the Father are **one**", meaning **in essence** (based on the Greek construction). Some Mormons would argue this just means 'one in purpose', but the Jews clearly understood Jesus' statement as blasphemy because they "took up stones again to stone Him" (Jn. 10:30-31).
- Jesus also claimed: "Before Abraham was born, **I AM**" (Jn. 8:58), a restatement of the name God used for himself to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**" (Ex. 3:14); the Jews understood this, too, as blasphemy, and tried to stone Jesus again (Jn. 8:59).
- "**God is spirit** and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:24).
- "Now the **Lord is the Spirit**" (2 Cor. 3:17).

- "The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14); all three members of the Trinity are mentioned together in this verse.

For more detailed explanations, the reader is referred to published articles by [Grider](#) and [Martin](#), the C.A.R.M. [webpage](#), and my section on [Jesus](#).

5. The Mormon church teaches that "God was once a man who achieved godhood". This doctrine, "**eternal progression**" is central to Mormonism, as stated in one of their frequently-used quotes:

- "**As man is, God once was: as God is, man may be**" (Lorenzo Snow, [Millennial Star](#), vol.54).

In Mormon theology, those who achieve godhood will have spirit children who will worship and pray to them just as we worship and pray to God the Father ([Gospel Principles](#), p.290). A pictorial diagram of the Mormon view of eternal progression can be found [here](#). This is not an isolated teaching: it has been **taught by a large number of prominent LDS leaders, including its founders**:

- [Joseph Smith](#) taught: "I will prove that the world is wrong, by showing what God is...**God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man**, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret...I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea**, and take away the veil, so that you may see" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.345);
- [Joseph Smith](#) continues: "God himself...is a **man** like unto one of yourselves...God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth...You have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**" ([Times and Seasons](#), vol.5, pp.613-614); "Here then is eternal life---to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**...the same as all Gods have done before you...To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, **until you arrive at the station of a God**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.346-347).
- [Brigham Young](#) taught: "**He [God] ...was once a man** in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted being...It appears ridiculous to the world, under their darkened and erroneous traditions, that **God was once been a finite being**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.7, p.333); "The Lord created you and me for the purpose of **becoming Gods like himself**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.3, p.93).

- Here is Joseph Smith's revelation about Mormons attaining to the **celestial** kingdom: "These are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized...who have received of his fullness, and of his glory...**they are gods**" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 51-58).
- James Talmage explains: "We believe in a God who **is Himself progressive**...whose perfection consists in eternal **advancement**...a Being who has **attained** His exalted state"([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.430, 1952).
- Heber C. Kimbal wrote: "We shall go back to **our Father and God, who is connected with one** who is still farther back; and this Father is connected with one still farther back, and so on" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.5, p.19); "our God is a **natural man**...where did he get his knowledge from? From **his father**, just as we get our knowledge from our earthly parents" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.8, p.211).
- Orson Pratt wrote: "The **Gods** who dwell in heaven...were once in a **fallen state**...they were exalted also, **from fallen men** to celestial Gods" ([The Seer](#), p.23); "**our Father in Heaven was begotten** on a previous heavenly world by His Father; **He was begotten by a still more ancient Father**; and so on from generation to generation, from one heavenly world to another" ([The Seer](#), p.132).
- Milton R. Hunter wrote: "God the Eternal Father was **once a mortal man** who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He **became** a God" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.104);"there was a time when the Deity **was much less powerful** than He is today...He **grew** in experience and continued to **grow** until He **attained** the status of Godhood. In other words, He became a God by absolute obedience..." ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.114-115).
- Bruce McConkie states: "God himself, the Father of us all, is a glorious, exalted, immortal, resurrected **man**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.642-643); "God...is a personal Being, a holy and **exalted man**...an anthropomorphic entity" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.250); "as the **Prophet** [Joseph Smith] also **taught**, '**there is a God above the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ'" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.322, 1966).
- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "**God is an exalted man**...our Father in Heaven at one time passed through a life and death and is an **exalted man**...The **Prophet** [Joseph Smith] **taught that our Father had a Father** and so on...promises are made to us that we may become like him" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.10-12).

Mormon leaders have continued to teach this doctrine, as is evident by a few quotes from recent President and Prophet Spencer W. Kimball in official LDS periodicals:

- "Brethren, 225,000 of you are here tonight. I suppose that **225,000 of you**

may become gods" (from a speech published in [The Ensign](#), November 1975, 1980).

- "In each of us is the potentiality to **become a God**" ([Tribune](#), Oct. 7, 1974).
- "Man can transform himself, but he has in him the seeds of Godhood that can grow. He can **lift himself by his very bootstraps**" ([Tribune](#), Sept. 18, 1974).
- "In spite of the opposition of the sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the [LDS] Church proclaims the eternal truth: 'As man is God once was; as God is, man may be'" (James Talmage in *The Articles of Faith*, a widely circulated LDS doctrinal book).

Current President and Prophet Gordon Hinkley admits, albeit reluctantly, in recent interviews to believing this doctrine ([San Francisco Chronicle](#), Sunday, 4/13/97, page 3/Z13; [Time magazine](#) August 4, 1997):

- "President Gordon Hinckley says the concept of God having been a man is not stressed any longer, but he [Hinckley] **does believe that human beings can become gods in the afterlife**" (Richard Ostling, interviewer for [Time magazine](#)).
- Hinckley states: "Well, they [men] can achieve to a godly status, yes, of course they can, **eternal progression**. We believe in the progression of the human soul. Ours is a forward-looking religion. It's an upward-looking religion" ([Public Broadcasting System](#); transcript dated July 18, 1997).

Attempts to tone down the importance of this doctrine are reflected in changes made to the recent edition of the LDS book [Gospel Principles](#), which is used to teach new members the doctrines of their church. Here is one example:

- The 1978 edition reads: "We can become **Gods** like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation" ([Gospel Principles](#), p.290, 1978);
- but the 1997 edition reads: "We can become **like** our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation" ([Gospel Principles](#), p.302, 1997).

6. The Bible teaches that God is unchangeable and that He has eternally existed as God:

- "I am God and **not man**, the Holy One" (Hosea 11:8)
- "God is **not a man** that He should lie" (Num. 23:19)
- "Even from **everlasting to everlasting**, Thou art God" (Ps. 90:2)
- "Thou art from **everlasting**" (Ps. 93:2)
- "Thou art the **same**" (Ps. 102:27)
- "For I, the Lord, **do not change**" (Mal. 3:6)

- See also: Is. 43:10; Is. 44:6, 8; Is. 48:11.

Mormons sometimes cite passages that speak of God 'repenting' (Gen. 6:6, Ex. 32:14, 1 Sam. 15:11,35) as evidence that He changes, yet **none of the passages speak of a change in God's nature**, only in an **apparent** change in His action.

7. In Mormon theology, "God has flesh and bones" and is therefore limited in capacity. According to Mormon authors:

- "God is an organized being **just as we** are who are now in the **flesh**" ([Gospel Doctrine](#), p.64).
- "The Father has a **body of flesh and bones** as tangible as man's ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 130:22).
- "God is **not omnipresent**...cannot be physically present in more than one place at a time"; "If God possesses a form, that form is of necessity of definite proportions, and therefore of **limited extension and space**. It is **impossible for Him** to occupy at one time more than one space of such limits" (Talmage, [A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.43,48).
- [Brigham Young](#) declared: "Some would have us believe that God is present everywhere. **It is not so**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.6, p.345).
- [Carfred Broderick](#) writes: "God is a procreating personage of **flesh and bone**" ([Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought](#), Autumn, 1967, p.100-101).

8. God, as described in the Bible is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. The Bible clearly states that God is **Spirit** and therefore **invisible**:

- "**God is Spirit** and those that worship Him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).
- "A spirit does **not have flesh and bones**" (Lk. 24:39).
- "**No man has seen God** at any time" (Jn 1:18).
- Jesus said: "**No man has seen the Father**, except the One who is from God" (Jn. 4:46).
- "And He [Jesus] is the image of the **invisible** God" (Col. 1:15).
- "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only God" (1 Tim. 1:17).
- "For he [Moses] endured, as seeing Him [God] who is **unseen**" (Heb. 11:27).
- "who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom **no man has seen or can see**" (1 Tim. 6:16).

If God had a body, He would be limited by time and space ([Beckwith](#)), which the

Bible says He is not:

- God is Omnipotent: "I [God] will **do whatever** I choose" (Is. 46:10); "You [God] are **all-powerful**, what you can conceive, you can perform" (Jb. 42:2); "To you [God] **nothing is impossible**" (Jer. 32:17); "For God **everything is possible**" (Matt. 19:26).
- God is Omniscient, because He has total knowledge of the past, present and future: "Our Lord is great, all-powerful, of **infinite understanding**" (Ps. 147:5); "He sees to the ends of the earth, and **observes all** that lies under heaven (Jb. 28:24); "From the beginning I [God] **foretold the future and predicted beforehand** what is to be" (Is. 46:10).
- God is Omnipresent: "Yahweh is indeed in heaven above as in earth beneath" (Deut. 4:39); "the heavens cannot **contain you** [God]" (1 Kings 8:27); "Yet...he [God] is **not far from any of us**, since it is in him that we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:24-28).
- God is Sustainer of the Universe: "you [God] made all the universe and it was only by your will that everything was made and exists" (Rev. 4:11); "it is He who gives everything, including life and breath, to everyone" (Acts 17:25); "for in Him all things were created in heaven and on earth...before anything was created **He existed, and He holds all things together**" (Col. 1:16-7).

While Mormons probably will not argue with the above verses, their view that God has flesh and bones precludes His possession of the other characteristics. To try to prove God's corporeality, Mormons often cite passages such as "the man Yahweh knew **face to face**" (Deut. 34:10); "Yahweh said...'I will...shield you with my **hand**...you shall see the **back** of me, but my **face** is not to be seen'" (Ex. 33:22-23). There are several serious flaws with this approach:

- These anthropomorphic metaphors are used by Biblical writers (in this case, Moses) to describe particular actions of God in human terms, and need to be interpreted using standard hermeneutical principles; e.g., they must be interpreted in accord with the rest of scripture.
- These passages refer to the God of the Old Testament, which Mormons teach is the pre-incarnant Jesus, **before he became corporeal**; they cannot logically use them to support their argument that the God of the Old Testament had flesh and bones ([Beckwith](#)).
- Such literal interpretations must also lead to the ridiculous conclusion that God has **feathers and wings** (Ps. 91:4) and is **on fire** (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24), that He is a **door** (Jn. 10:9), a **fountain** (Ps. 91:4), a **loaf of bread** (Jn. 6:35,51), and a **vine** (Jn. 15:1-5), etc. This sort of reasoning ignores the literary style and intent of the author.

Mormons might also argue: 'What about the statements in Genesis (1:27, 9:6) that man was made in the image of God. Doesn't that mean God is like man?' No, these

verses must be interpreted in context and in accord with the entirety of scripture, where very clear statements are made about God's spirit nature (e.g. Jn. 4:24, see above). For example, the Genesis phrase 'In the image of God' must obviously refer to man's intellectual capability, self-awareness, speech, spiritual nature, God-awareness, etc. ([McElveen](#)). For example, the Bible also states that "God is not a man" in the sense that "he cannot lie" (Num. 23:19).

9. The Mormon church teaches that we have a Heavenly Mother as well as a Heavenly Father.

- [Brigham Young](#) stated: "Brother [Kimball](#) quoted a saying of [Joseph the Prophet](#), that he would not worship a God who had not a father; and I do not know that he would if he had not a **mother**; the one would be as absurd as the other" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.9, p.286).
- Apostle [Orson Pratt](#) stated: "But if we have a heavenly **Mother** as well as a heavenly Father, is it not right that we should worship the **Mother** of our spirits as well as the Father? No...it is lawful for the children to worship the King of Heaven, but not the '**Queen** of heaven'" ([The Seer](#), p.159).
- Apostle [Bruce McConkie](#) writes: "Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an Eternal Father is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an **eternal mother**. An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a **woman** of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a **mother...This doctrine that there is a mother in heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church...when...they said..'**that all men and women are in the similitude of the **universal Father and Mother'**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.516, 1966).
- [Milton R. Hunter](#) (First Council of the Presidency) states: "The stupendous truth of the existence of a **Heavenly Mother**, as well as a Heavenly Father, became established facts in Mormon theology" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.98, 1958).
- Linda Wilcox reports recent discussion of this subject in the LDS Church: "Lately there has been increased discussion and speculation about how we can or do relate to our **Heavenly Mother** (or possibly mothers?). Orson Pratt taught that we are not to worship the mother of our spirits although we worship the father...Rodger Clawson, however, pointed out that men as well as women and children crave a **Mother in Heaven** to worship and 'yearn to adore her'. He said, 'It doesn't take from our worship of the Eternal Father, to adore our **Eternal Mother**... Currently, there is no encouragement on the part of the Mormon church leaders to pray to a **Heavenly Mother**, and in fact even active discouragement...Still, there has been recently a more evident desire to reach out to **Mother in Heaven** in some way..." (Sunstone, vol. 5,

no.5, p.13-14).

10. The Bible simply makes **no reference whatsoever** to a Heavenly Mother nor to a wife for God.

11. Mormon leaders, Brigham Young in particular, have taught that Adam was God. Although this doctrine has been officially repudiated by the LDS church in recent times, it is well documented that it was consistently and repeatedly taught by Brigham Young and other church leaders. This serves to undermine their claims to authority as true prophets and spokesmen for God.

- Brigham Young proclaimed: "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. **He helped to make and organize this world.** He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days, about whom holy men have written and spoken---**He is our father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 1, p.50-51, a sermon given on April 9, 1852).
- Brigham Young stated: "Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh **by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 1, p.50-51).

Brigham Young also said that when his sermons were corrected, they were scripture ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 13, p.95). The one above was printed one year later in the Church's [Millennial Star](#) paper and in the [Journal of Discourses](#) where Brigham Young had to approve it. However, he did not correct or amend it over the ensuing 25 years before his death in 1877. Much to the contrary, on June 18, 1873 the [Deseret News](#) printed another of his sermons in which he stated:

- "How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I have revealed to them, and which God revealed to me...namely that **Adam is our Father and God...Our Father Adam is the man who stands at the gate and holds the keys to everlasting life and salvation** to all his children who have or ever will come upon the earth" (Brigham Young, [Deseret News](#), June 18, 1873).

President Young felt strongly about criticism he received from others in the LDS Church, notably Orson Pratt, about this doctrine: "Now, let all who may hear these

doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, **for they will prove their salvation or damnation**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.1, p.50-51).

- F.D. Richards, a prominent Mormon confirms this was doctrine: "Concerning the doctrine that **Adam is our Father and God**...the prophet and Apostle **Brigham has declared it, and that is the word of the Lord**" ([Millennial Star](#), August 26, 1854, vol.16, p.534).
- Hosea Stout confirms this: "Another meeting this evening. **President B. Young taught that Adam was the Father of Jesus and the Only God to us**" (Diary of Hosea Stout, April 9, 1852, vol. 2, p.435).
- Other leaders taught it, including George Q. Cannon: "Jesus Christ is Jehovah...**Adam is his Father and our God**" (Diary of Abraham H. Cannon, June 23, 1889, vol.11, p.39).
- Mormon A.F. McDonald commented: "The doctrine preached by [President] Young for a few years back wherein **he says that Adam is our God**---the God we worship--- **most of the people believe it**...if the President makes a statement it is not our prerogative to dispute it...when I first heard the **doctrine** of Adam being our Father and God, I was favorably impressed--- enjoyed and **hailed it as a new Revelation**" (Minutes of the School of Prophets, Provo, UT, 1868-1871, p.38-39).
- Mormon Edward W. Tullidge wrote: "**Adam is our Father and God**. He is the God of the Earth. **So says Brigham Young**" and "When **Brigham Young proclaimed to the nations that Adam was our Father and God**, and Eve, his partner, the Mother of a world---both in a mortal and celestial sense---**he made the most important revelation** ever oracled to the race since the days of Adam himself" (The Women of Mormondom, p.79,179,196-197, 1877).
- John Nuttall records: "Prest **Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation** & said...**Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior)** who is the heir of the family is Father Adam's first begotten in the spirit world" (Wednesday Feb. 7, 1877, [Journal of John Nuttall](#), vol.1, p.18-21).

These are only a few of the evidences that Brigham Young taught the Adam-God doctrine. Additional documentation can be found in the [Journal of Discourses](#) (vol.5, p.331-332) and in articles of the [Millennial Star](#) (vol.15, p.801; vol.16, p.482,530,534; vol.17, p.195) and [Deseret News](#) (June 14, 1873).

Most recent Mormon leaders deny that Brigham Young taught this doctrine, claim it was erroneously transcribed, or denounce it as false. However, because Young's statements can be extremely well documented, this undermines the credibility of one or both parties ^{12,13}.

- Spencer W. Kimball stated: "We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are **alleged to**

have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the **Adam-God theory**. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of **false doctrine**" ([Church News](#), October 9, 1976).

- Joseph Fielding Smith said this about Brigham Young's statements: "in all probability, the sermon was **erroneously transcribed**" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.96).
- Hugh Brown (a member of the First Presidency) stated: "The **Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine** of the Church, and the reports on that subject as published in the Journal of Discourses are **not accurate**" (in a letter dated May 13, 1966).
- More recently, Apostle Bruce McConkie admits: "Yes, **President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things** the cultists [orthodox Christians] ascribe to him" (letter to Eugene England dated Feb. 19, 1981, photocopy available from Challenge Ministries, P.O. Box 20195, El Cajon, CA, 92021).

In fairness, Bruce McConkie went on to say (in the letter cited above): "**He** [Brigham Young] **expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel**" (letter to Eugene England dated Feb. 19, 1981). However, the consequences associated with Young's false teaching are not clear, because McConkie goes on to say: "We will be judged by what we believe among other things. If we believe false doctrine, we will be condemned. If that belief is on basic and fundamental things, it will lead us astray and we will lose our souls...(2 Nephi 28:15). This clearly means that **people who teach false doctrine in the fundamental and basic things will lose their souls. The nature and kind of being that God is, is one of these fundamentals. I repeat: Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and kind of being that God is and as to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation...what he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach the false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will damn us**" (letter to Eugene England dated Feb. 19, 1981). It is not clear why the ordinary Mormon is damned for doing this, but Brigham Young is not. For thorough documentation and discussion of this topic, two references should be consulted: [Turner](#) and [Vlachos](#)).

12. The Bible states Adam was only a created being, the first man.

- "And God **created** man in His own image, in the image of God He **created** him; male and female He **created** them" (Gen. 1:27).
- "Then the Lord God **formed man** of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and **man became** a living being" (Gen. 2:7).
- "When God **created** man, He made them in the likeness of God. He **created** them male and female" (Gen. 5:1-2).

- "For as in Adam all **die**" (1 Cor. 15:22).
- "So also it is written, 'the first man Adam **became** a living soul'" (1 Cor. 15:45).
- "For it was Adam who was first **created**" (1 Tim. 2:14).

What is more, this idea is inconsistent with the clear teaching of man's fallen nature being derived from Adam (Job 31:33; Hosea 6:7; Rom. 5:14). Orthodox Christians will recognize most of Brigham Young's statements about Adam to be complete blasphemy.

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Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Jesus

	Mormon Teaching	Biblical Teaching
Conception	Jesus was conceived by physical union between God the Father and Mary ¹	Jesus was conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit ²
Marital Status	Jesus had several wives ³	No indication that Jesus was married ⁴
Relationship to Satan	Jesus was the brother of Lucifer (Satan) ⁵	Satan is only a fallen, created angel ⁶
Origin	Jesus was created ^{7,11}	Jesus always was, is now, and forever shall be God; all things were created through Jesus ⁸
Deity	The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct gods ⁹	There is only one God, but three distinct Persons in the Godhead ¹⁰
His Constancy	Jesus is our elder brother who progressed to become a god ¹¹	Jesus has existed as God eternally ¹²
Role in Our Salvation	Jesus Christ plays only an initial role in our salvation ¹³	Salvation is through trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross alone, apart from any work by us ¹⁴
	Certain sins are beyond the atoning blood of Christ ¹⁵	Christ's sacrifice on the cross was complete ¹⁶
	Jesus is only one of many saviors ¹⁷	Jesus is the one and only Savior ¹⁸
Personal Relationship	A personal relationship with Christ is discouraged as false doctrine ¹⁹	A personal relationship with Christ is a central part of Christianity ²⁰

(click on any reference number to show detailed documentation of each statement in the lower frame)

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Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Jesus

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section titled "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. Mormon prophets have taught that Jesus was conceived by sexual intercourse (physical union) between God the Father and Mary:

- [Brigham Young](#) taught: "The birth of the Savior was as **natural as are the births of our children**; it was the result of **natural action**. He partook of flesh and blood---was begotten of his Father as we were of our fathers" ([Journal of Discourses](#) vol.8, p.115); and "when the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness [[flesh](#) and [blood](#)]. He was **not begotten by the Holy Ghost**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.1, p.50).
- Brigham Young insisted: "I will say that I was naturally begotten; so was my father, and **also** my Savior Jesus Christ...he is the first begotten of his father in the flesh, and there was **nothing unnatural** about it" ([Journal of Discourses](#) vol.8, p.211); "Now remember from this time forth, and for ever, that **Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.1, p.51).
- [Orson Pratt](#) (LDS apostle) taught: "the Father and **Mother of Jesus**, according to the flesh, must have been **associated together** in the capacity of Husband and Wife...as God was the first husband to her, it may be that He only gave her to be the wife of Joseph while in this mortal state, and that He intended after the resurrection to **again take her as one of his own wives** to raise up immortal spirits in eternity" ([The Seer](#). p.158, 1853).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) wrote: "The birth of the Savior was a **natural** occurrence **unattended by any degree of mysticism**, and the Father God was the **literal parent of Jesus in the flesh** as well as in the spirit" ([Religious Truths Defined](#), p.44).

This teaching persists today:



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- Bruce McConkie (LDS apostle) states: "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father **in the same way that mortal men are begotten** by mortal fathers" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 547, 1979).
- Carfred Broderick (Mormon author) writes: "God is a procreating personage of flesh and bone...latter-day prophets have made it clear that despite what it says in Matthew 1:20, **the Holy Ghost was not the father of Jesus...The Savior was fathered by a personage of flesh and bone**" (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Autumn, 1967, p.100-101).

Despite the well-documented position of previous Mormon prophets, presidents, and apostles about the nature of Christ's conception, modern LDS apologists maintain that "Christ was born of a virgin". How can they? By changing the definition of the word "virgin". The reasoning goes like this: since Mary had sexual relations with an immortal man, not a mortal man, the phrase "virgin birth" still applies.

- McConkie explains: "Suffice it to say that our Lord was born of a **virgin**, which is fitting and proper, and **also natural**, since the Father of the Child was an **immortal** Being" (The Promised Messiah, p. 466).

2. The Bible teaches that Jesus was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah that the Messiah would be born of a virgin:

- "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a **virgin** will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14).
- "Now the birth of Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child **by the Holy Spirit...**for that which was conceived in her is **of the Holy Spirit**" (Matt. 1:18,20).
- "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'. And the angel answered and said to her 'The **Holy Spirit will come upon you** and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'" (Luke 1:34-5).

God intended that the birth of the Messiah would be a miraculous event that---like His resurrection---would provide evidence to the skeptical and confirm that the Messiah was indeed approved by the Father.

3. Mormon leaders have taught that Jesus was a polygamist. Because Mormon prophets considered polygamy a righteous principle and practiced it (despite reversals in doctrine and concessions to U.S. law by the LDS Church), it is easy to

see why they taught Jesus was married and had multiple wives:

- Orson Pratt (LDS apostle) stated: "the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, **was a polygamist...marrying many honorable wives** himself...God the Father had a **plurality** of wives...the Son followed the example of his Father...both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ **inherit their wives** in eternity as well as in time" ([The Seer](#), p.172, 1853).
- Jedediah M. Grant (second counselor to Brigham Young) stated: "the burst of public sentiment in anathemas upon Christ and his disciples, **causing his crucifixion**, was evidently based on **polygamy...a belief of a plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus** and his followers" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 1, p.346).

Some Mormon leaders contend that the wedding at Cana was an account Jesus' marriage:

- Apostle Orson Hyde: "...**Jesus Christ was married at Cana** of Galilee... **Mary, Martha, and others were his wives** ... he begat children" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 2, p.210).
- Jedediah M. Grant: "**Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana** of Galilee, and he told them what to do... Now there was actually a marriage; and if Jesus was not the bridegroom on that occasion, please tell who was. If any man can show this, and prove that it was not the Savior of the world, then I will acknowledge I am in error. We say **it was Jesus Christ who was married**, to be brought into the relation whereby he could see his seed, before he was crucified" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.2, p.82).
- Orson Hyde: "It will be borne in mind that once on a time, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and on a careful reading of that transaction, it will be discovered that no less a person than **Jesus Christ was married on that occasion**. If he was never married, **his intimacy with Mary and Martha, and the other Mary** also whom Jesus loved, must have been highly unbecoming and improper to say the best of it" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.4, p.259).
- Orson Pratt: "We have now clearly shown that **God the Father had a plurality of wives**, one or more being in eternity, by whom He begat our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born... We have also proved most clearly that the **Son followed the example of his Father, and became the great Bridegroom** to whom kings' daughters and many honorable wives are to be married" ([The Seer](#), p. 172).

4. The Bible makes no explicit or implicit statements about Jesus being married.

The Mormon interpretation of John 2 as describing Jesus' own wedding ignores any reasonable reading of the plain text:

- The Apostle John's stated purpose in describing the wedding feast at Cana was to recount Christ's first miracle (Jn. 2:11).
- According to John, Jesus and the disciples came because his mother Mary was invited (Jn. 2:1). Why would Jesus or His mother need to be invited to Jesus' own wedding (John 2:2)?
- Why is someone else referred to as the bridegroom (John 2:9)?
- Why is there no mention of a physical wife or physical offspring for Jesus anywhere else in the gospels or epistles?

The fact that **Jesus did not marry during his incarnation** is consistent with the New Testament claim that Jesus is the bridegroom and the church (collectively) is His bride.

- "For the husband is the head of the **wife**, as Christ also is head of the **church**...love your **wives**, just as Christ also loved the **church**...A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the **two shall become one flesh**. This mystery is great, but **I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church**" (Eph 5:23-32).
- "**He who has the bride is the bridegroom** [Jesus]; but the friend [John the Baptist] of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice" (Jn. 3:29). This passage occurs later in John and is not referring to the wedding at Cana.
- The Bible describes the marriage supper of the Lamb to the **church, His bride** (Rev. 19:7; 21:2,9).
- The Bible forbids polygamy, calling it an abomination (Deut 17:17; see also section on [polygamy](#)). Since Jesus was a spotless lamb (1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 9:14) without sin (Is. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21), **he could not have committed polygamy**.

5. The Mormon Church has taught that Jesus is the brother of Lucifer.

- President [Spencer W. Kimball](#) wrote "Long before you were born a program was developed by your creators ... The principal personalities in this great drama were a Father Elohim, perfect in wisdom, judgment, and person, and **two sons, Lucifer and Jehovah**." ([Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#), p. 32-33).
- [James Talmage](#) explains who Jehovah is: "**Jesus Christ was Jehovah**...Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#),

vol.1, p.11,27).

- Milton R. Hunter (one of the LDS General Authorities) explains "The appointment of Jesus to be Savior of the world was contested by **one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer...this spirit-brother of Jesus** desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.15, 1945).
- Joseph Smith stated: "The contention in heaven was...Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the **Devil said he could save them all**, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favour of Jesus Christ. So the Devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 6, p. 8).
- "And Satan came among them, saying: **I am also a son of God**" ([Pearl of Great Price, Moses 5:17](#)).
- See also [Mormon Doctrine](#), pp.192, 546-47, 589-90 and [Gospel Principles](#) p.15-16.

6. The Bible describes Satan [Lucifer] as a created being:

- "You [Lucifer] were in Eden, the garden of God...on the day that **you were created**...you were the anointed cherub...you were blameless in your ways from the day **you were created** until unrighteousness was found in you...your heart was lifted up...you corrupted your wisdom" (Ez. 28:13,15,17).
- "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which God **had made**" (Gen. 3:1).
- "Even Satan disguises himself as an **angel of light**. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14-5). Based on the construction of these sentences, the distinction being made is about the **type** of angel that Satan appears to be. His servants can disguise themselves as servants of righteousness but are in reality servants of unrighteousness; likewise, Satan is an angel of darkness but can disguise himself as an angel of light. According to the Bible, angels are created beings.

Satan cannot be a son of God if he is an angel:

- "But to which of the angels did He [God] ever say, 'Thou art my Son, today I have begotten Thee'?" (Heb. 1:5).

7. According to Mormon doctrine, Jesus was procreated as a spirit child of the

Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother and later conceived physically by the Heavenly Father and an earthly mother: [The Ensign](#), Jan. 1989, pp.28-29; [Come Unto Christ](#) by Ezra Taft Benson, p.4).

- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Christ the Word, the Firstborn, had of course attained unto the status of Godhood **while yet in pre-existence**" ([What Mormons Think of Christ](#), p.36).
- Bruce McConkie continues: "He is the Firstborn of the Father. By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, **while yet in his pre-existent state**" (Mormon Doctrine, 1966, pg. 129).
- [Orson Pratt](#): "God the Father had a plurality of wives, one or more being in eternity, by whom **He begat our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born**" (The Seer, p. 172).
- "Jesus Christ is not the Father of the **spirits** who have taken or yet shall take bodies upon this earth, for **He is one of them**. He is The Son, as they are sons and daughters of Elohim." ([Encyclopedia of Mormonism](#), vol.4, Appendix 4).

8. The Bible declares that Jesus has always existed and that all things were created through Him:

- "For **in Him** all things were created, both in the heavens and the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities---**all things have been created through Him and for Him**" (Col. 1:16).
- "**In the beginning was the Word** and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us [Jesus]" (Jn. 1:1,18).
- "**All things came into being through Him** [Jesus]; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (John 1:3).

9. Mormons worship the Father and the Son as separate Gods. Mormons teach that Jesus Christ is a God named Jehovah, a different God from God the Father, whose name is Elohim.

- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Three separate personages---Father, Son, and Holy Ghost---comprise the Godhead...As **each of these persons is a God**, it is evident from this standpoint alone, that a **plurality of Gods** exists. To us...these **three are the only Gods** we worship" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.576-7).
- [James Talmage](#) states: "This [the Trinity] **cannot rationally be construed to**

mean that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one in substance and person" ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.40).

- [James Talmage](#) states: "**Jesus Christ was Jehovah**...Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In all of scripture, where God is mentioned and where he has appeared, it was Jehovah...The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.1, p.11,27).
- [Joseph F. Smith](#) stated, "Among the **spirit children** of Elohim, the first-born was and is **Jehovah, or Jesus Christ**, to whom all others are juniors" ([Gospel Doctrine](#), p.70).

In contrast, the Bible uses the names Elohim and Jehovah interchangeably for the one true God. The English form "Jehovah" was developed from four consonants (YHWH) from which we get the word "Yahweh," translated "LORD". The words "Yahweh" and "Elohim" are used together hundreds of times, as in: 'LORD our God', 'LORD my God', 'LORD his God', 'LORD your God'. For example: "The Lord [Jehovah] our God [Elohim] is one Lord [Jehovah]" (Deut. 6:4). See also Gen. 2:4-22; Deut. 4:1; Judges 5:3; 1 Sam. 2:30; Is. 44:6.

10. The Bible portrays Jesus as one member of the Trinity. Orthodox Christianity's established concept of God is that Jesus and the Father share the same essence (are one and the same God). A substantial part of the book of Colossians is dedicated to refuting a heresy denying Christ's Deity. A few of the relevant passages are given below in which Jesus is identified with, and acts as, [God](#):

Statements about Jesus' Deity:

- "In Him [Jesus] all the **fullness of Deity** dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).
- "It was the Father's good pleasure for **all the fullness** to dwell in Him [Jesus]" (Col. 1:19).
- "He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [God] glory and the **exact representation of His nature**" (Heb. 1:3).
- "But of the **Son** He [God] says, 'Thy Throne **O God** is forever and ever'" (Heb. 1:8).
- "In the **beginning was the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us" (John 1:1,14).
- Of Jesus it was announced: "These are the words of **Him who is the First and the Last**, who died and came to life again" (Rev. 2:8); the same claim made by God Almighty: "This is what the LORD says -- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: **I am the first and I am the last**; apart from me there is no God" (Is. 44:6). Also, compare Rev. 22:13 with Is. 48:12.

Claims by Jesus about His Deity:

- Jesus claimed: 'I and the Father are **one**', meaning **in essence** not just purpose (from the Greek construction), a statement the Jews clearly understood because they "took up stones again to stone Him" (Jn. 10:30-31).
- Jesus also claimed: "Before Abraham was born, **I AM**" [ego eimi], a restatement of the name God used for himself to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**"; the Jews also understood its import and tried to stone Jesus. (Jn. 8:58-59; Ex. 3:14). See also Jn. 13:19, 18:5,6,8).
- Jesus makes the same claim again: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that **I AM**, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).
- "Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father'...Jesus said to him...'**He who has seen Me has seen the Father**'" (Jn. 14:8-9).
- "He who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me" (Jn. 12:45).

Jesus allowed Himself to be worshipped, despite the biblical edict that '**only God may be worshipped**' (Acts 10:25-26; Rev. 19:10; 22:9):

- "Thomas answered [to Jesus] 'My Lord and **My God**'" (John 20:28).
- "When I saw Him [Jesus], **I fell at His feet**" (Rev. 1:17).
- "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to **worship him**" (Matt. 2:2).

For more detailed explanations of the Trinity, refer to published articles by [Grider](#) and [Martin](#), and the [CARM webpage](#).

11. Mormon leaders teach that Jesus is our elder brother who progressed to become a god.

- Milton R. Hunter: "**Jesus became a God** and reached His great state of understanding **through consistent effort and continuous obedience** to all the Gospel truths and universal laws" ([The Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.51).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Christ the Word, the Firstborn, had of course **attained unto the status of Godhood** while yet in pre-existence" ([What Mormons Think of Christ](#), p.36).
- Bruce McConkie claimed: "Jesus kept the commandments of his Father and thereby **worked out his own salvation**, and also set an example as to the way and the means whereby all men may be saved" (*The Mortal Messiah*, Vol.4, p.434).
- McConkie continues: "He [Jesus] is the Firstborn of the Father. **By obedience**

and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 129).

12. The Bible states that Jesus has existed as God eternally. Here are a few of many verses stating this:

- "In the **beginning was the Word...** the Word was God... the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us" John 1:1,14).
- "But **of the Son** He [God] says, 'Thy Throne O God is **forever and ever**'" (Heb. 1:8).
- "Christ Jesus, who although **He existed** in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6).
- "glorify me together with Thyself Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee **before the world was**" (John 17:5).
- "God...has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds**" (Heb. 1:2).

13. The Mormon church teaches that Jesus Christ plays only an initial role in our salvation. In other words, the work of Christ on the cross is **insufficient** for our complete salvation (exaltation) and **we must also perform works** in order to be fully saved.

- The Book of Mormon says of salvation: "for we know that is is by grace that we are saved, **after all that we can do**" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 25:23).
- The Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**" ([Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) explains what that last phrase means: "that which **man merits through his own acts** through life and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.134).
- [Spencer W. Kimball](#) stated: "living **all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins** and assures one of exaltation...**trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance** when one merely tries to abandon sin" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p.164-165, 354-355).

More information can be found in the section on [salvation](#).

14. The Bible clearly states that our complete salvation comes only through the finished work of Christ on the cross, apart from any work on our part. One verse from the Bible sums up the problem with the Mormon concept of salvation:

- "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and **seeking to establish their own**, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).

This was Paul's description of the Jews but applies as well to Mormons and to anyone who thinks they need to, or can, add to the completed work of Christ. According to the Bible, our **works prove we have salvation, but cannot help us attain salvation:**

- "I do not frustrate the grace of God; **for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly**" (Gal. 2:21).
- "For by grace you have been saved through **faith**; and that **not of yourselves**, it is the gift of God; **not as a result of works**, that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).
- "The **blood** of Jesus Christ his Son **cleanses us** from **all sin**" (1 Jn. 1:7).
- Paul to the Phillipian jailer's question: "What must **I do** to be saved? **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).
- Jesus to the thief on the cross, who **did nothing but trust Him as Messiah and King**: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
- Jesus: "**This is the work of God**, that **you believe on him** whom He [God the Father] has sent" (Jn. 5:29).
- "**He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness**, but according to his mercy." (Titus 3:5).
- "For Christ is the **end of the law for righteousness** to everyone who **believes**" (Rom. 10:4).

In contrast to Mormon leaders, in the New Testament the Apostle Paul clearly states the Gospel and salvation are without any works on our part. For specific references and discussion see the section on [salvation](#).

15. Mormon leaders have taught that certain sins are beyond the atoning blood of Christ.

- Brigham Young said: "It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sins through the fall and those committed by men, yet **men can commit sins which it can never remit**...there are sins that can be atoned for by an offering on the altar...and there are sins that the blood of a lamb...cannot remit, but

they **must be atoned for by the blood of the man**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.4, p.53-54, also published in [Deseret News](#), p.235, 1856).

- Brigham Young also said: "There is not a man or a woman, who violates the covenants [fidelity in marriage] made with their God, that will not be **required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.3, p.247)
- [Bruce McConkie](#) explains: "But under certain circumstances there are some serious sins for which the **cleansing of Christ does not operate**, and the law of God is that **men must then have their own blood shed to atone** for their sins" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.92).
- McConkie continues: "Christians speak often of the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. Much that is believed and taught on this subject, however, **is such utter nonsense and so palpably false that to believe it is to lose one's salvation**. Many go so far, for instance, as to pretend, at least, to believe that if we confess Christ with our lips and avow that we accept Him as our personal Savior, we are thereby saved. His blood, without other act than mere belief, they say, makes us clean" (What the Mormons Think of Christ, p.22).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) shows that this idea originated with Joseph Smith: "Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressors **beyond the power of atonement of Christ**. If these offenses are committed, then the **blood of Christ will not cleanse** them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their **only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone**, as far as possible, in their behalf" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.135); "the **law of sacrifice will have to be restored**...Sacrifice by the shedding of blood was instituted in the days of Adam and of necessity will have to be restored" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 3, p.94).
- Brigham Young said: "Will you love your brothers and sisters likewise, when they have **committed a sin that cannot be atoned for without the shedding of their own blood**?...This is loving our neighbor as ourselves; if he needs help, help him; and if he wants salvation and it is **necessary to spill his blood on the earth in order that he may be saved**, spill it" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 4, p.219-220).
- B.H. Roberts stated: "what is needful for the salvation of the soul where **one's sins place him beyond the reach of vicarious means of salvation** [by Jesus] --- then it is the **shedding of the sinner's own blood** that must be here referred to" ([A Comprehensive History of the Church](#), vol.4, p.129, 1965).

The LDS Church officially denies the **doctrine of Blood Atonement** now, even saying that it was never taught. Here are additional arguments to the contrary:

- Blood atonement was practiced in Utah during Brigham Young's presidency and during the presidency of his immediate successors. The facts have been

extremely well documented in sources readily available to the public ([Tanner, Kelly](#)).

- The Salt Lake Tribune, wrote, "In the past decade, potential jurors in every Utah capital homicide were asked whether they believed in the **Mormon concept of 'blood atonement'**" (Concept of Blood Atonement Survives in Utah Despite Repudiation, Salt Lake Tribune, 11/5/94, p.D1).
- When child-killer James Edward Wood, a Mormon, was tried for the murder of 11-year-old Jaralee Underwood, he was visited by LDS Church leaders who "**talked to him about shedding his own blood**" (Salt Lake Tribune, 11/5/98, D1).
- University of Utah professor Richard J. Cummings writes: Accordingly, the **doctrine** [blood atonement] asserts that those who commit certain grievous sins such as murder and covenant-breaking place themselves beyond the atoning blood of Christ, and their only hope for salvation is to have their own blood shed as an atoning sacrifice. In his writings, Joseph Smith only **hinted at the doctrine**, Brigham Young successively **denied and asserted it**, Joseph F. Smith **ardently defended it**, and in more recent years, Hugh B. Brown repudiated it and Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie both have **vigorously defended it in principle** while staunchly denying that the Church has ever put it into actual practice, whereas most other General Authorities have prudently preferred to remain silent on the subject. It should be noted that the whole notion of blood atonement is so obviously linked to the Mormon literal mind-set that it does not seem to admit of a mitigated, symbolic interpretation and is either accepted or rejected outright, depending on one's level of literalistic belief (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Vol.15, No.4, p.93).

16. The Bible teaches that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was complete for all time and that we cannot add to it with our works:

- "He is able to **save forever** those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb. 7:25).
- "He entered the holy place **once for all**, having obtained **eternal redemption**" (Heb. 9:12).
- "So Christ also, having been **offered once** to bear the sins of many, shall appear..." (Heb. 9:28).
- "He, having offered **one sacrifice for sins for all time**" (Heb. 10:12).
- "For by **one offering He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).
- "There is **no longer any offering for sin**" (Heb. 10:18).
- "Having forgiven us all our transgressions, having **cancelled out the certificate of debt...He has taken it out of the way**, having nailed it to the

cross" (Col. 2:14).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches two very important and fundamental truths in regard to keeping the law:

A. Following the law cannot take away sin:

- "our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (Is. 64:6).
- "For the law...can never by the same sacrifices year by year...make perfect those who draw near...but in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is **impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**" (Heb. 10:1-4).
- "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same **sacrifices, which can never take away sins**" (Heb 10:11).
- "For the **law made nothing perfect**" (Heb 7:19).
- "**by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**" (Gal. 2:16).
- "For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly" (Gal. 2:21).
- "For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law" (Gal. 3:21-22).
- "Therefore the law has become a **tutor** to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor**" (Gal. 3:24-25).

B. Even if an additional sacrifice would be acceptable to God, which it is not (Heb. 10:18), we are **not qualified or able to add anything** to our redemption, because **we meet none of the requirements**:

- a. Atonement requires the shedding of blood (Lev. 17:11).
- b. The sacrifice must be unblemished (Lev. 22:19).
- c. The sacrifice must be performed by an appointed Priest (1 Sam. 2:28).
- d. The High Priest must be lawfully clean (Ex. 29:1-9;19-35).

Jesus is the only one who has **fulfilled all** of these conditions: a) Heb. 9:22; b) 1 Peter 1:19; c) Heb. 2:14; 5:1; d) Heb. 9:22.

17. Mormon Leaders have claimed that Jesus Christ is only one of many Saviors:

- According to Joseph Fielding Smith: "We are not the only people that the Lord has created. **We have brothers and sisters on other earths**. They look like us because they, too, are the children of God and were created in his

image, for they are also his offspring" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#) 1:62).

- Brigham Young taught: "Sin is upon every earth that ever was created ... Consequently **every earth has its redeemer**, and every earth has its tempter" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 14, p.71).

18. The Bible states that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the one and only Messiah.

- Jesus claimed: "**I am THE way**, THE truth, and THE life; no one comes to the Father but by Me" (Jn. 14:6).
- "For there is one God and **one mediator** also between God and men: the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- "There is **salvation in no one else**; for there is **no other name under heaven** that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

19. Mormon leaders have discouraged their members from pursuing a personal relationship with Christ.

- Mormon Apostle and apologist Bruce McConkie warns: "I shall speak of our relationship with the Lord and of the true fellowship all saints should have with the Father. **I shall set forth what we must believe relative to the Father and the Son in order to gain eternal life...**many false and vain and foolish things are being taught in the sectarian world and even among us about our need to gain a special relationship with the Lord Jesus...**gaining a special relationship with Christ is both improper and perilous...**now I know that some may be offended at the counsel that **they should not strive for a special and personal relationship with Christ...**you have been warned, and **you have heard the true doctrine taught**" (from a speech given at a B.Y.U. devotional on March 2, 1982).

20. The Bible encourages a personal, intimate relationship of each believer with Christ because He is our only source of true life:

- Jesus said: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so **neither can you unless you abide in Me...apart from Me you can do nothing**" (Jn. 15:4-5).
- Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of

Man and drink His blood, **you have no life in yourselves...**He who **eats my flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life...**My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink" (Jn. 6:51-55).

- Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the **life**" (Jn. 11:25).
- "For I have been crucified with Christ and **it is no longer I who live**, but **Christ lives in me**" (Gal. 2:20).
- "When **Christ who is our life** is revealed, then you also shall be revealed with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).
- Paul's desire was: "that I may **know Him** [Jesus]" (Phil. 3:10).
- God is faithful, by whom you were called into the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

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Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Salvation

	Mormon Teaching	Biblical Teaching
How?	Salvation comes through faith plus baptism plus works ¹	Salvation comes only through receiving the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, apart from any work by us ²
The Gospel	Gospel = Christ's death plus our obedience to laws, principles, rites ³	Gospel = message of Christ's complete redemptive work ⁴
The Only Way	The LDS church is the only way to enter the highest heaven ⁵	Jesus is the only way to heaven ⁶
Heaven	There are three levels of heaven ⁷	There is one heaven of God ⁸
Hell	There is no eternal hell ⁹	There is a literal hell ¹⁰
For Whom?	Salvation is universal ¹¹	Salvation is only for those who trust Christ ¹²
The Dead	The dead outside of Christ can get to heaven by proxy baptism ¹³	This life is our only chance to receive Christ ¹⁴

(click on any reference number to show detailed documentation of each statement in the lower frame)

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References: Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Salvation

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section titled "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. Mormons teach that salvation (exaltation) comes through faith in Christ plus baptism plus works, i.e., we must add to the work of Christ. In the Bible 'salvation' means deliverance from the consequence (eternal separation from God) of our sin. Mormon leaders have [redefined](#) the word 'salvation' to have a two-fold meaning: a) forgiveness of sins and b) **universal resurrection**:

- "There will be a General Salvation for all in the sense in which that term is generally used, but salvation, **meaning resurrection**, is not exaltation" (Stephen L. Richards, Contributions of Joseph Smith, LDS tract, p.5).
- "All men are saved by grace alone without any act on their part, **meaning they are resurrected**" ([Bruce McConkie](#), What Mormons Think of Christ", LDS tract, p.28).

Thus, when a Mormon speaks of 'salvation by grace', he is usually referring to universal resurrection. Mormons use the term 'exaltation' to refer to attain a place in the highest level of heaven. **The Mormon term 'exaltation' is more nearly equivalent to the Biblical term 'salvation'**. What do Mormon leaders say about this?

- The Book of Mormon says of salvation: "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, **after all that we can do**" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 25:23).
- The LDS Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**" ([Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) explains what that last phrase means: "that which **man merits through his own acts** through life and **by obedience to the laws and ordinances** of the gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.134).
- [James Talmage](#) explains: "...redemption from personal sins can only be obtained through **obedience** to the requirement of **the Gospel, and a life of good works**" (James Talmage, in [A Study of the Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Spencer W. Kimball](#) states: "however powerful the **saving grace of Christ, it brings exaltation to no man who does not comply with the works of the gospel**" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, pg. 207); "Each command we obey **sends us another rung up the ladder** to perfected manhood and toward godhood; and every law disobeyed is a sliding toward the bottom where man



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merges into the brute world" ([Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#), pg. 153); "living **all** the commandments **guarantees total forgiveness of sins** and assures one of exaltation...**trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance** when one merely tries to abandon sin" ([The Miracle of Forgiveness](#), p.164-165, 354-355).

- [Bruce McConkie](#) claimed: "Jesus kept the commandments of his Father and thereby **worked out his own salvation**, and also **set an example as to the way and the means** whereby all men may be saved" ([The Mortal Messiah](#), Vol.4, p.434).

What works do they mean? Here are some:

- **Baptism for the dead:** "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead...Those saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at **peril of their own salvation**" ([Joseph Smith](#), in [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.356, 196).
- **Marriages sealed** in the Temple: "Marriage is not only a righteous institution, but obedience to this law [Temple marriage] is **absolutely necessary** in order to obtain the **highest exaltation** in the Kingdom of God" (Milton R. Hunter, in [Gospel Through the Ages](#), p.119).
- **Keeping the whole law:** "To enter the celestial [kingdom] 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](#), in [The Way to Perfection](#), p.206).
- **Plural marriage:** "the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on earth, and that **without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fullness of exaltation** in the celestial glory" (William Clayton in [Historical Record](#), p.266); "**the only men who become gods, even the Son of God, are those who enter into polygamy**" ([Brigham Young](#), in [Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 11, p.269). This doctrine has been downplayed by recent church leaders but its stated requirement for exaltation by the LDS founders can be well [documented](#).

Because these ordinances can only be kept in the Mormon church, that church claims to be the [only path](#) to true salvation.

2. According to the Bible, our salvation comes only through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, apart from any work on our part. Mormons accuse Christians of teaching "cheap grace", whereby one can believe in Christ and then live however

one pleases. But the Apostle Paul anticipates this response and shows why it is false in Romans chp. 6. Mormons have the same problem with Paul's concept as do many of the cults formed in the first century: it's too simple, too easy, and could be attained by anyone.

A serious problem with the Mormon argument that the 'Christian concept of grace can be easily abused' is that it **denies the Biblical promise that anyone who comes to Christ will be transformed by God into a new creation** with a new heart created to serve Him by the power of the Holy Spirit:

- "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away, behold **new things have come**" (2 Cor. 5:17).
- "Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the **new self who is being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:10).
- "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the **new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth" (Eph. 4:23-24).
- "However, you are **not in the flesh** but in the Spirit, if indeed the **Spirit of God dwells in you**" (Rom. 8:9).
- "It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**" (Gal. 2:20).
- "I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you, and I will remove the heart of stone...and I will put **My Spirit** within you and **cause you to walk in My statutes**" (Ezekiel. 36:26-27).

A second problem with the Mormon teaching on salvation is that it reveals a **misunderstanding of the place of works** in a Christian's life as described in the New Testament.

a. Works do not help us earn God's favor:

- "For Christ is the **end of the law for righteousness** to everyone who **believes**" (Rom. 10:4).
- "I do not frustrate the grace of God; **for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly**" (Gal. 2:21).
- "**He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness**, but according to his mercy" (Titus 3:5).

b. Rather, works that God does through us glorify Him and prove we are Christians:

- "I will **show you my faith** by my works" (James 2:18).
- "By this **all men will know you are my disciples**, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34).
- "**We know that we have passed out of death into life**, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:14).

- "...that they may be perfected in unity, that the **world may know** that You [God the Father] sent Me [Jesus] and loved Me" (Jn. 17:23).
- "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is **God who is at work in you, both to will and to work** for His good pleasure" (Phil. 3:12-13).
- "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works which God prepared** beforehand that **we should walk in them**" (Eph. 2:10).

What is more, salvation by works is not even possible. Why not? First, because even our best deeds are impure and ineffective:

- "**our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment**" (Is. 64:6).
- We are "justified by faith in Christ, and **not by the works** of the law; since **by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**" (Gal. 2:16).
- "For the law...**can never by the same sacrifices year by year...make perfect those who draw near...but** in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is **impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**" (Heb. 10:1-4).
- "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same **sacrifices, which can never take away sins**" (Heb 10:11).
- "For the **law made nothing perfect**" (Heb 7:19).
- "For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly" (Gal. 2:21).
- "For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law" (Gal. 3:21-22).

Second, God's standard is too high for us to attain---**absolute perfection**:

- "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in **one point**, he has become **guilty of all**" (James 2:10).
- Jesus explained that God's standard was much higher than just outward deeds: "Whoever shall **say** [to his brother] 'you fool' shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire" (Matt. 5:22); "Every one who **looks** on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28); "**Every careless word** that men shall speak, they shall render account for it on the day of judgement" (Matt. 12:36).

If **we are all guilty of breaking the whole law**, how many good works will it take to redeem us? Therefore, the Bible can make the outrageous and wonderful promise that **we can know for sure that we will go to heaven**, because the work of redemption by Jesus is **complete**:

- "These things I have written unto you who **believe** in the name of the Son of God, **in order that you may know that you have eternal life**" (1 Jn. 5:13).
- "therefore having been **justified by faith**, we have **peace** with God through

our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

- "Therefore brethren, **we have confidence to enter the holy place** by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).
- Jesus told his followers who believe that they have eternal life (Jn. 1:12; 5:24; 6:40; 20:31).

That there could be nothing left for us to do is incomprehensible to Mormons. Yet the Bible says we are to rest in the finished work of Christ:

- "For the one **who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works**, as God did from His (Heb. 4:10).

3. The Mormon church teaches that the 'gospel' consists of Christ's redemptive work plus our obedience to laws, principles, ordinances, and rites.

- The Book of Mormon says of salvation: "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, **after all that we can do**" ([Book of Mormon](#), 2 Nephi 25:23).
- The LDS Third Article of Faith states: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel**" ([Pearl of Great Price: Articles of Faith](#)).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) states: "**man merits through his own acts** through life and **by obedience to the laws and ordinances** of the gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.134).
- [Spencer W. Kimball](#) stated: "living **all** the commandments **guarantees total forgiveness of sins** and assures one of exaltation...**trying is not sufficient. Nor is repentance** when one merely tries to abandon sin" ([The Miracle of Forgiveness](#), p.164-165, 354-355).

Because these 'ordinances of the gospel' can only be kept in the LDS church, the Mormon church claims to be the [only path](#) to true salvation.

4. The Bible teaches that the 'gospel' (good news) is the message of Christ's complete redemptive work. As Paul explains to the church at Corinth, "the gospel which I **preached** to you, which you also **received**, in which you also **stand**, by which you also are **saved**" (1 Cor. 15:1-2):

- "I also delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that **He was raised** on the third day **according to the Scriptures**, and

that **He appeared** to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that **He appeared** to more than five hundred brethren at one time..." (1 Cor. 15:1-6).

And to the church at Rome, Paul says:

- "the gospel of God, which He **promised** beforehand through His prophets in the holy **Scriptures** concerning His Son, who was **born** of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was **declared with power** to be the Son of God **by the resurrection** from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:1-4).

Central to this message, as indicated by the highlighted words in the above passages, is the **historical, verifiable fact** that **Christ was raised from the dead** (1 Cor. 15:12-14):

- it was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, validating Jesus as Messiah,
- it was the culmination of His miraculous power, validating Jesus as Messiah,
- it was verified by several sets of witnesses (over 500),
- it confirmed that God accepted Christ's sacrifice for our sins (1 Cor. 15:17),
- it gives us hope for our own resurrection (1Cor. 15:19-20).

Our part is not to perform works in order to gain acceptance, our part is that we believe and receive Jesus Christ, which means **placing our total trust in Him for salvation**. This is the meaning of the Greek word John used for 'believe' over 50 times in his gospel:

- "Through His name every one who **believes** in Him **has received** forgiveness of sins " (Acts 10:43).
- "He who hears my word and **believes** Him who sent Me has eternal life and **does not** come into judgement" (Jn. 5:24).
- "Every one who beholds the Son, and **believes** in Him, may **have** eternal life, and I myself **will raise him up** on the last day" (Jn. 6:40).
- "As many as **received** Him, to them He **gave** the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** on His name" (Jn. 1:12).
- "By grace **you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

5. Mormons teach that the LDS Church is the only way to enter the highest heaven.

- The Mormon scriptures state: "this church [Joseph Smith's]... **only true and living** church upon the face of the whole earth" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#),

1:30).

- Apostle Bruce McConkie states: "There is **no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.670).
- Marion Romney (speaking as a member of the LDS First Presidency) said, "This Church is the ensign on the mountain spoken of by the Old Testament prophets. **It is the way**, the truth, and the life" (Conference Report, April, 1961, pg. 119).
- Mormon president and prophet Brigham Young declared: "he that confesseth not that Jesus has come in the flesh **and sent Joseph Smith with the fullness of the Gospel** to this generation, is not of God, but is anti-christ" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.9, p.312).
- Mormon president and prophet Ezra Taft Benson stated: "This is not just another Church. This is **not just one of a family of Christian churches**. This is THE Church and kingdom of God, **THE only true Church** upon the face of the earth..." (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.164-165).

What is more, Mormon leaders have taught that Joseph Smith must give his consent before anyone can enter heaven:

- [There is] "**no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith**" (Joseph Fielding Smith, in [Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol. 1, p.190).
- "No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God **without the consent of Joseph Smith**" (Brigham Young, in [Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p.289).
- Bruce McConkie states: "**If it had not been for Joseph Smith** and the restoration, there would be **no salvation**" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.670).
- Joseph Fielding Smith said: "If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth...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, p.190).
- Brigham Young stated: "every man and woman must have the **certificate of Joseph Smith**, junior, as a **passport to their entrance** into the mansion where God and Christ are" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 7, p.289).
- George Q. Cannon: "If we get our salvation, **we shall have to pass by him** [Joseph Smith]; if we enter our glory, it will be through the authority he has received. **We cannot get around him** [Joseph Smith]" (quoted in the Melchizedek Priesthood Study Guide, p. 142, 1988).

Any true Christian should be appalled by these statements because they undermine the completed and accepted sacrifice of Christ.

6. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the **ONLY** way to God and heaven.

- Jesus said: "I am **THE** way, **THE** truth, and **THE** life; **no one** comes to the Father but through Me" (Jn. 14:6).
- "And there is salvation in **no one else**; for there is **no other name** [Jesus] under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- "For there is one God, and **one mediator** also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5).

7. The Mormon church teaches there are three levels to heaven, and only those who are worthy LDS members will attain the highest level:

- **Telestial Kingdom** - is where unbelievers go: "These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus...who receive not his fullness in the eternal world", but shall be "redeemed from the devil [at] the last resurrection" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 82-86).
- **Terrestrial Kingdom** - is for religious people who aren't Mormons and for Mormons who have not met the requirements of the Church, i.e., "Honorable men of the earth who are blinded by the craftiness of men and who therefore do not accept and live the gospel law" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p. 784). While this level is not as desirable as the Celestial Kingdom, the presence of the Son is evident there: "These are they who receive of his glory but not of his fulness... **the presence of the Son, but not the fullness of the Father**...who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus...they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of God" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 76-79).
- **Celestial Kingdom** - is for Mormons who have kept **ALL** of the laws and ordinances of their church: "These are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized...in the water...**keeping the commandments that they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins**, and receive the Holy Spirit ..." ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 51-57).; "**they are gods**, even the sons of God...these shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever...whose names are written in heaven" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 58-68).

What will the celestial kingdom supposedly be like for a good Mormon? He will be a [god](#) and he will rule over a [planet](#) with his wives and spirit children.

Incidentally, the Mormon doctrine about the three levels of heaven is derived from **two verses** in the Bible, 2 Cor. 12:2 and 1 Cor. 15:40, where the Apostle Paul refers to different degrees of glory (see below) and to someone (presumably himself) as

being caught up in the "third heaven". Mormon leaders have completely misinterpreted and misconstrued these verses to mean that there are three levels of heaven. The additional "revelation" from which they get the three levels supposedly came to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon on Feb. 16, 1832 as recorded in Section 76 of the [Doctrine and Covenants](#).

8. The Bible describes only one heaven as a believer's reward. Heaven is the place where:

- Only true believers in Christ will be allowed entrance (Hebrews 12:23; John 3:16-21; Rev. 2:11; 20:6).
- Believers will abide with God for all eternity in His presence. The light of the Lamb will fill it (Rev. 21:23).
- Entrance will not be attained by [works](#).

The Bible does use the term for 'heaven' in three ways, although it never distinguishes between 3 levels relevant to our eternal destiny:

- A 'first' heaven is the earth's atmosphere: "The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands" (Deut. 28:12). See also Deut. 11:17; Judges 5:4; Acts 14:17.
- A 'second' heaven is outer space (sun, moon and stars): "They will be exposed to the sun and the moon and all the stars of the heavens which they have loved and served" (Jeremiah 8:2). See also Ps. 19:4,6; Is. 13:10.
- A 'third' heaven is the dwelling place of God: "then hear from heaven, your dwelling place" (1 Kings 8:30). See also Ps. 2:4; Matt. 5:16.

There will be different degrees of reward in heaven, which are then cast at Jesus' feet (Rev. 4:4,10), but all who are there will be with Christ (Rev. 22:4-5).

9. Mormon leaders teach that there is no eternal hell. Although the Book of Mormon mentions a literal, everlasting hell (e.g. 2 Nephi 28), later 'revelations' to church leaders teach the concept of a "preparatory stage between death and a final judgement", similar to the Catholic concept of purgatory.

- John A Widtsoe, Mormon Apostle states: "The meanest sinner will find some place in the heavenly realm...In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **there is no Hell. All will find a measure of salvation**" (Joseph Smith-

Seeker After Truth, p.177-178, 1951).

- Mormon historian B.H. Roberts explains: "Christians believed that to receive eternal punishment was to be punished eternally. This popular **Christian error** was corrected in a revelation" (Outlines of Ecclesiastical History, p.408).
- One of the Mormon 'revelations' states: "Nevertheless, it is **not written that there shall be no end** to this torment" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 19:6).
- [Joseph Fielding Smith](#) explains the meaning of that passage: "We learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that eternal punishment, or everlasting punishment, **does not mean** that a man condemned will endure this punishment forever" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.2, p.160).

Mormons claim that the inhabitants of hell will receive a second chance at redemption:

- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "Every man who hears the gospel message is under obligation to receive it. If he fails, then **in the spirit world he will be called upon to receive it**" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.2, p.183).
- Joseph Fielding Smith also stated: "they will first go to hell and remain there until the corruption with which they are impregnated is burnt out; and the day will yet come when they will come to me and **acknowledge me as their Savior, and I will redeem them and bring them forth from hell**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.3, p.109).
- [Joseph Smith](#) claimed to receive a 'revelation' showing him that: "These are they who are thrust down into hell...who shall not be redeemed from the devil **until** the last resurrection" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 76: 84-85).

Mormons also teach that a special place called **perdition** is reserved "for Satan, and the Sons of Perdition, angels who rebelled with him and also for men who commit the unpardonable sin" (Talmage, [A Study of the Articles of Faith](#)).

10. The Bible warns that a real and eternal hell awaits those who do not trust in Christ in this life. In fact, of the 24 times hell is referenced in the New Testament, 22 of those were made by Jesus ([McElveen](#)).

- Those who will go to hell include every person who does not place trusting faith in Christ for redemption from their sins (John 3:18).
- Jesus specifically described how real hell is for unbelievers (Matt. 8:12, 25:41-46).
- It is eternal separation from God in a painful and final state (Rev. 14:10-11; 2 Thess. 1:9).

- It is, in actuality, a second death (Rev. 21:8).

The Bible does not speak of any opportunity to obtain salvation after rejecting Christ in this life; rather it says:

- "it is appointed for **men to die once, and after this comes judgement**" (Heb. 9:27).

11. Mormon leaders teach that 'salvation' is universal. This is in addition to, and distinct from, the biblical concept that "there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24:15). To Mormons, salvation is equated with resurrection:

- John A Widtsoe states: "In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **there is no Hell. All will find a measure of salvation**" (Joseph Smith-Seeker After Truth, p.177-178, 1951).
- James Talmage states: "**Even the unbeliever**, the heathen, and the child who dies before reaching the years of discretion, **all are redeemed** by the Savior's self-sacrifice from the individual consequences of the fall ([A Study of the Articles of Faith](#), p.58).
- Joseph Fielding Smith again: "Those who live lives of wickedness **may also be heirs of salvation**, that is, they too **shall be redeemed from death and from hell eventually**" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol.2, p.133).

12. The Bible teaches that salvation is only for those who trust in Christ.

John uses the word "believe" at least 55 times in his gospel, including the following references to salvation:

- "He who hears my word and **believes** Him who sent Me has eternal life and **does not** come into judgement" (Jn. 5:24).
- "Every one who beholds the Son, and **believes** in Him, may **have** eternal life, and I myself **will raise him up** on the last day" (Jn. 6:40).
- "As many as **received** Him, to them He **gave** the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** on His name" (Jn. 1:12).
- "He who **believes has eternal life**" (Jn. 6:47).
- "He who **believes in the Son has eternal life**" (John 3:36).
- "Whoever **believes** may in Him have eternal life" (Jn. 3:15).
- "Whoever **believes in Him** should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

In the sense that the apostle John used the Greek word for believe, he did not mean mere intellectual ascension, but **placing our total trust in Jesus for salvation**. That is why, in the same context, Jesus used other verbs to indicate a **definite action on the believer's part**:

- ""Whoever **drinks** of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (Jn. 4:14).
- "He who **eats** my flesh and **drinks** my blood has eternal life" (Jn. 5:54).
- "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may **eat** of it and not die" (Jn. 6:50).
- "Unless you **eat** of the flesh of the Son of Man and **drink** of His blood you have no life in yourselves" (Jn. 6:53).
- "This is eternal life, that they may **know** Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:2).

13. The Mormon church teaches that the dead outside of Christ can get to heaven (albeit the terrestrial kingdom) **by proxy baptism**. Mormons believe that there is a "paradise" or spirit world where all will go after death. In this spirit world, there are missionaries who give people one more chance to accept or reject the message of Mormonism. If one accepts, they are baptized by proxy into the church here on earth. This ceremony is performed in one of the LDS temples and is the primary reason why Mormons research and keep genealogical records ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) section 128).

- "And the chosen messengers went forth to declare...Thus was the **gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets**. These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins...and all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves...and **so it was made known among the dead**" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 138:31-35).
- "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to **seek after our dead**...Those saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at **peril of their own salvation**" (Joseph Smith, in [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.356, 196).
- "These are the principles in relation to the dead and the living...**their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation**...they without us cannot be made perfect---neither can we without our dead be made perfect...there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children...it is **baptism for the dead**. For we without them cannot be made perfect" ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) 128:15,18).

This doctrine is derived from one verse in the Bible (1 Cor. 15:29) where Paul refers to a fringe group practicing baptism for the dead. Even the [Encyclopedia of Mormonism](#) (published by the LDS church) admits: "He [Paul] refers to a practice of vicarious baptism, a practice for which we have **no other evidence** in the Pauline or other New Testament or early Christian writings", and also agrees with the interpretation that it is not a doctrine Paul advocates: "Paul clearly refers to a distinct group within the Church, a group that he accuses of inconsistency between ritual and doctrine".

14. The Bible teaches that this life is our only chance to receive Christ.

- "It is appointed for men to **die once**, and after this comes judgement" (Heb. 9:27).
- "An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, those who committed the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, **those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement**" (Jn. 5:28-29).
- "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him**" (John 3:36).

Mormons may ask 'then what does 1 Cor. 15:29 mean?'

- "Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?" (1 Cor. 15:29).

This verse must be understood in the context of the whole passage. Paul raises the subject of baptism in the context of expressing his concern about party factions among the Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14-17). Rather than endorsing baptism for the dead, Paul associates it with a group (perhaps the Marchionite sect) whom he has already identified (15:12) as being in deep error. He is saying that even this group, who deny the resurrection, are baptizing for the dead in anticipation of resurrection.

The impersonal manner in which Paul refers to practitioners of proxy baptism also indicates he is not endorsing the practice: "what will **those** do who are baptized for the dead...why then are **they** baptized for **them**?" The impersonal 'they' contrasts markedly with the way Paul addresses believers in the same chapter, as 'you' (v. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 14, 17, 31, 34, 36, 51, 58), or 'we', or 'us' (15: 3, 15, 19, 30, 32, 49, 51, 52). In the context of 15:29, 'they' refers to the ones who are denying the resurrection, the ones the entire passage is written to refute (15:12).

This is exactly the understanding of the text held by the early Christian writer

Tertullian. Writing about A.D. 180, he makes this comment on 1 Cor. 15:29 — "His [Paul's] only aim in alluding to it was that he might all the more firmly insist upon the resurrection of the body, in proportion as they who were vainly baptized for the dead resorted to the practice from their belief of such a resurrection". The apostle Peter accurately predicted that Paul's words would be misinterpreted and misconstrued by some:

- "Our beloved brother Paul...wrote to you, as also in all his letters...in which there are **some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

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Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Man

	Mormon Teaching	Biblical Teaching
Origin	Man was a pre-existent spirit ¹	Man was created by God ²
Progression	Man can progress to become a God ³	Man can be redeemed and reborn but will always be a man ⁴
Sin	Adam's fall was a 'fall upward'; it was not sinful ⁵	Adam's sin caused spiritual and physical death for all men ⁶
Marriage	Man can marry for eternity and rule over a planet of his spirit children ⁷	There is no marriage in heaven ⁸
	Man may have multiple wives simultaneously ⁹	Plural marriage has always been an abomination to God ¹⁰
Priesthood	Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods are restored and necessary ¹¹	Jesus superceded the Old Testament priesthood - all Christians are priests ¹²
God's Children	All of us are children of God ¹³	One becomes a child of God only by faith in Christ Jesus ¹⁴

(click on any reference number to show detailed documentation of each statement in the lower frame)

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References: Mormon vs Biblical Teachings about Man

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard version. For information on sources of Mormon quotations, see the section titled "[Mormon Documents](#)".

1. The Mormon church teaches that man was a pre-existent spirit and that mankind is of the same species as God. Our origin is supposed to have been as procreated children of God, born as spirits in some other realm. In that spirit world existence we progressed as far as was possible, but to become truly like our Heavenly Father we needed to obtain physical bodies. We also needed to learn the difference between good and evil. Since our Heavenly Father has progressed so far that He cannot allow evil into His presence, it was necessary for us to leave Him for some place where we could encounter and overcome evil ourselves:

- "The mind of man is as immortal as God Himself...**God never did have the power to create the spirit of man** at all" (Times and Seasons 5:615 and History of the Church 6:310-311).
- "We were **first begotten as spirit children in heaven** and then born naturally on earth" (Journal of Discourses, 4:218).
- "**Before coming to this earth, all humans were begotten** by our heavenly parents and were born with spirit bodies" (Mormon Doctrine p. 428, 516-17).
- "all had a **previous existence**, thousands of years ago, in the heavens, in the presence of God" (Journal of Discourses 1:62).

So, according to Mormon teaching, this world was prepared as a school, where we have been sent to obtain physical bodies and to learn the lessons of mortality:

- President Spencer W. Kimball stated: "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" (The Miracle of Forgiveness p. 5).

According to Mormon teaching, two of man's older brothers, Jesus and his spirit brother Lucifer, both wanted to be savior. When Jesus was chosen, Lucifer rebelled and convinced one third of the spirit brothers to fight with him and revolt. **All pre-mortal humans participated in this war.** Those who fought on the side of Lucifer became the demons. Those who fought most valiantly on the side of Jesus and Elohim were born in Mormon families.



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Milton R. Hunter summarized this doctrine by stating that "we are as eternal as God Himself. But to achieve perfection and godhood, we must go through at least four stages of life: **In the first stage each of us were conscious eternally existing beings called 'intelligences'**. In that realm, we experienced good and evil, love and hate, free agency and so on until we had completed our work there" (The Gospel Trough the Ages, pp. 126-129).

2. The Bible clearly teaches that God created Adam, the first man, and all other men after him. This is in direct contrast with the Mormon teaching that man had a pre-existent life before being put on this earth.

- "And **God created man** in His own image, in the image of God **He created him**; male and female **He created them**" (Gen 1:27).
- "Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and **forms the spirit of man within him**" (Zech. 12:1).
- "Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, **who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it**" (Is 42:5).
- "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).
- "But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and **all of us are the work of Your hand**" (Is. 64:8).
- "Where were you [man] when I [God] laid the foundation of the earth?" (Job 38:4).
- One verse commonly used by Mormon missionaries is Jer. 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you..." But this verse is not talking about pre-existence. It is talking about God's ordination and appointment of Jeremiah to be a prophet to his nation. Look at the whole verse: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and **before you were born I consecrated you**; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."
- How could Jesus say this if the people he addressed were pre-existent with Him? "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And I will declare to them, '**I never knew you**; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:21-23).
- 1 Cor. 15:46-50 says, "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. **The first man is from the earth**, earthy; the second man is from heaven". He mentions the nature of man in the proper order: natural then spiritual. Paul continues on, "As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

The Mormon doctrine about pre-existent spirits is linked to their teaching about [eternal progression](#). The argument goes like this: 1) Jesus was eternally existent (which is biblical); 2) [Jesus progressed from a man to become a god](#); 3) therefore man must also be eternally existent if he can progress to become a god.

3. The Mormon church teaches that God, men, angels, and devils, are of the same nature, but at different levels of progression ([Mormon Doctrine](#) p.238-239, 192-195; [Gospel Principles](#) p.9; [Gospel Through the Ages](#) p.15; [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#) p.345, 346, 370). For example:

- LDS Apostle Parley P. Pratt wrote, "God, angels, and men are **all of one species, one race**, one great family, widely diffused among the planetary systems as colonies, kingdoms, nations, etc...**Angels are of the same race as men**. They are, in fact, men who have passed from the rudimental state to the higher spheres of progressive being...They have not a single attribute that man has not. But their attributes are more matured, or more developed, than the attributes of men in this present sphere of existence" (Key to the Science of Theology, 1978 Deseret Book reprint, pg. 21,69).
- [Brigham Young](#) claimed, "Angels are those beings who have been on an earth like this, and have passed through the same ordeals that we are now passing through...**They are persons who have lived upon an earth**, but did not magnify the Priesthood in that high degree that many others have done who have become Gods, even the sons of God. Human beings that pertain to this world, who do not magnify or are not capable of magnifying their high calling in the Priesthood and receive crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives, will also, when they again receive their bodies, become angels and will receive a glory" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 9:102).
- B. H. Roberts asks, ""What are angels? They are intelligences of the human species. Many of them are offspring of Adam and Eve. That is they are men, who have, like Enoch or Elijah, been translated; or, like Jesus Christ, been raised from the dead; consequently they possess a material body of flesh and bones" (The Mormon Doctrine of Deity, pg. 256).
- The Mormon view of angels is linked to their belief that the angel Moroni, who supposedly appeared to Joseph Smith. According to LDS tradition, Moroni was once a human and a commander in the Nephite army (a supposedly ancient people of the Americas). Moroni was instructed by his father Mormon to bury the gold record just prior to the Nephites' annihilation by their dark-skinned Lamanite enemies. These plates would later be "translated" by Joseph Smith and eventually come to be known as the [Book of Mormon](#).

The Mormon church also teaches that man may progress to become a god. Therefore, they also teach that "God was once a man who achieved godhood". In Mormon theology, those who achieve godhood will have spirit children who will worship and pray to them just as we worship and pray to God the Father ([Gospel Principles](#), p.290). This has been taught by a large number of prominent LDS leaders, including its founders:

- [Joseph Smith](#) taught: "I will prove that the world is wrong, by showing what God is...**God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man**, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret...I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. **I will refute that idea**, and take away the veil, so that you may see" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.345);
- [Joseph Smith](#) continues: "God himself...is a **man** like unto one of yourselves...God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth...You have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**" ([Times and Seasons](#), vol.5, pp.613-614); "Here then is eternal life---to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to **learn how to be Gods yourselves**...the same as all Gods have done before you...To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, **until you arrive at the station of a God**" ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p.346-347).

For **more complete coverage** of this doctrine, refer to the section on [eternal progression](#).

4. The Bible teaches that God, men and angels are separate beings of different nature.

According to the Bible, men and angels are created whereas God existed from eternity. Therefore the idea of men turning into angels has no biblical support. The Bible declares that angels are a distinct creation of God; in other words, an angel was created as such, and is not a being that has undergone some sort of spiritual development or physical evolution.

- Psalm 148:2,5 clearly demonstrates that angels were created as angels when it says, "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts...Let them praise the name of the LORD: for **he commanded, and they were created**."
- Colossians refers to both men and angels: "For by Him [Jesus] **all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth**, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or **rulers or authorities** --- all things have been created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

5. Mormon doctrine teaches that Adam's fall was a 'fall upward' and it was not sinful.

Mormonism maintains that Adam's sin was necessary for the propagation of the human race: As Mormon scriptures state:

- "Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy" (Book of Mormon, [2 Nephi 2:25](#)).
- "And in that day Adam blessed God...saying...for because of my transgression my eyes are opened and in this life I shall have joy" (Pearl of Great Price, [Book of Moses 5:10-11](#)).

Mormon writers explain:

- Adam's sin was "a necessary step in the plan of life and a **great blessing** to all mankind" ([Gospel Principles](#), p.31).
- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "The fall of Adam came as a **blessing in disguise**...nor do I accuse Adam of a sin...it is not always a sin to transgress a law...we can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits as being a sin" (Doctrines of Salvation 1:114-115).
- "Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction. He fell toward the goal...Adam fell, but **he fell upward**" (Deseret News, p.7, July 31, 1965)
- John A. Widtsoe stated: "Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden "became a **necessary and honorable act** in carrying out the plan of the Almighty" (Joseph Smith---Seeker After Truth, p.160).

Is this Mormon teaching inconsequentially different from Paul the Apostle's exposition in Romans 5:12-21? No:

- "Mormonism rejects the notion that man's condition is best described by 'depravity'. Nowhere within Mormon theology is its optimism concerning man's natural condition more apparent than in this denial of the Christian doctrine of original sin" (Owen Kendall White, Jr., The Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy", p.101-104, University of Utah thesis, June 1967).

6. The Bible teaches that Adam's sin caused spiritual and physical death for all men:

- "Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and **death through sin**, and so **death spread to all men**, because all sinned (Rom. 5:12).
- "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] the **many died**" (Rom. 5:15).
- "for on the one hand [Adam] the **judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation**" (Rom. 5:16).
- "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], **death reigned** through the one [Adam]" (Rom. 5:17).
- "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men" (Rom. 5:18).
- "For as **through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners**" (Rom. 5:19).

Man has been punished because he thought he could make himself to be like God: Ez 28:1-10:

- "Yet you are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God" (Ez. 28:2).
- "Because you have made your heart Like the heart of God...I will bring strangers upon you...They will bring you down to the pit" (Ez. 28:6-8).
- "Will you still say, 'I am a god', ...Though you are a man and not God" (Ez. 28:9).

Man's sin was not the result of the plan of God:

- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and **He Himself does not tempt anyone**. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (James 1:13-15).
- "Then to Adam He [God] said... '**Cursed** is the ground because of you; In **toil** you will eat of it all the days of your life...By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground...For you are dust, And **to dust you shall return**" (Gen 3:17-19).
- While Adam's sin was not in the plan of God, God did redeemed us out of it: "The gift [salvation] is not like that which came through the one [Adam] who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification " (Rom. 5:16).

7. The Mormon church teaches that man can marry for eternity and has the potential to rule over a planet of his own spirit children. One of the requirements to reach this goal is what Mormons call "celestial marriage.

Today celestial marriage is simply defined as a marriage in a Mormon temple designed to last not just until death but throughout all eternity. Couples joined in such marriages are considered "sealed" to each other. Their children afterward are automatically "sealed" to them as well. This, they believe, ensures that their family will continue in heaven eternally as a complete unit. Those who become Gods will each have his own world and with his wife (wives?) procreate spirits who will be raised to maturity and go into bodies on the new world. These new people will worship those who procreated their spirits, in the same way we worship God the Father. (in [Gospel Principles](#), 1986 ed. pp. 9, 190-191 and older editions).

- Apostle [Bruce R. McConkie](#) stated: "Exalted parents are to their children as our Eternal Parents are to us. Eternal increase, a continuation of the seeds forever and ever, eternal lives -- **these comprise the eternal family of those who gain eternal life**. For them new earths are created, and thus the on-rolling purposes of the Gods of Heaven go forward from eternity to eternity" ([The Millennial Messiah](#), p.23).
- McConkie continues: "Every person **married in the temple for time and for all eternity** has sealed upon him, conditioned upon his faithfulness, all of the blessings of the ancient patriarchs, including the crowning promise and assurance of eternal increase, which means, literally, a posterity as numerous as the dust particles of the earth" ([The Millennial Messiah](#), p.264).
- Bruce McConkie wrote, "**Celestial marriage is the gate to exaltation**, and exaltation consists in the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Exaltation is...the kind of life which God lives" ([Mormon Doctrine](#) pg. 257). Celestial marriage is an absolute necessity to reach this desired goal. Its importance in the place of salvation and exaltation cannot be overestimated. "The most important things that any member of (the LDS Church) ever does in this world are: 1) To marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority; and 2) To keep the covenant made in connection with this holy and perfect order of matrimony..." ([Mormon Doctrine](#) p. 118).
- Apostle [Orson Pratt](#) stated: "Each God, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters; indeed, there will be no end to the increase of his own children: for each father and mother will be in a condition to multiply forever and ever. As soon as each God has begotten many millions of male and female spirits, and his Heavenly inheritance becomes too small, to comfortably accommodate his great family, he, in connection with his sons, organizes a new world, after a similar order to the one which we now inhabit, where he sends both the male and female spirits to inhabit tabernacles of flesh and bones" ([The Seer](#), p. 37).
- Orson Pratt continues: "Thus each God forms a world for the accommodation of his own sons and daughters who are sent forth in their times and seasons, and generations to be born into the same. The inhabitants of each world are required to reverence, adore, and worship their own personal father who

dwells in the Heaven which they formerly inhabited" ([The Seer](#), p. 37).

Of course, this Mormon view of 'eternal life' is only available to those whose marriage is sealed in a Mormon Temple, who perform Temple ordinances, etc. and eventually reach the celestial kingdom.

- Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "Those who are married in the temple for all time and eternity obtain the blessing of eternal lives. I put stress on eternal lives. Eternal life is God's life... **To be married outside of the temple is for time only**" (Answers to Gospel Questions, vol. 4, p.197).

8. The Bible does not teach that man can be married for eternity; nor is earthly marriage connected with salvation.

While the Bible teaches that it is good for man to marry (Gen. 2:24, 1 Cor. 7:2,9), it is not a requirement for salvation, nor is marriage designed to last for all eternity:

- The Sadducees put a hypothetical question to Jesus about a woman married successively to seven brothers: 'In the resurrection, ...which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her?' (Mark 12:23). Jesus replied: "For when they shall rise from the dead, **they neither marry, nor are given in marriage**; but are as the angels which are in heaven" (Mark 12:25).

At face value and according to historically interpretation, Jesus appears to be saying that heaven will be much different than life as we know it on earth.

Mormon leaders have interpreted this passage quite differently:

- Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "What then is the Master Teacher affirming by saying, 'in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven'? He is not denying but limiting the prevailing concept that there will be marrying and giving in marriage in heaven. He is saying that as far as 'they' (the Sadducees) are concerned, that as far as 'they' ('the children of this world') are concerned, the family unit does not and will not continue in the resurrection. Because he does not choose to cast his pearls before swine, and because the point at issue is not marriage but resurrection anyway, Jesus does not here amplify his teaching to explain that there is marrying and giving of marriage in heaven only for those who live the fulness of gospel law-a requirement which excludes worldly people" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1:605,606).
- David H. Yarn, Jr., a BYU professor emeritus of philosophy and religion, said, "The Lord did not say there would be no people in the married state in

the resurrection but that there would be no marriages made in the resurrection" (A Sure Foundation, p. 115)

According to the Bible, in heaven Christ is married to his church collectively and perhaps individually. This seems to be why there is no marriage between men and women:

- "the marriage of the Lamb [Christ] has come and His bride [the church] has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).
- "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as **a bride adorned for her husband**...Come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb**" (Rev 21:2,9).
- "He who has the bride [the church] is the bridegroom [Jesus]" (Jn. 3:29).
- "Let the bridegroom [Messiah] come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber" (Joel 2:16).

9. Mormon leaders have taught that polygamy is a righteous principle and even that its practice is necessary to attain the highest level of heaven. They justify this doctrine in part on the observation that in the Old Testament both unbelievers (i.e. Lemech, the son of Cain, and Belshazzar, the king of Babylon) and believers (i.e. Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon) were known polygamists.

While a Mormon might be excommunicated for practicing polygamy today, the command to engage in plural marriage is still included in modern editions of the [Doctrine and Covenants](#). Section 132:4 declares: "For behold, I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory."

- "the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on earth, and that **without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fullness of exaltation** in the celestial glory" (William Clayton in [Historical Record](#), p.266);
- [Brigham Young](#) stated: "**the only men who become gods, even the Son of God, are those who enter into polygamy**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 11, p.269).
- [Heber C. Kimball](#) (first counselor to Brigham Young) declared, "**You might as well deny 'Mormonism,' and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives.**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol. 5, p.203).
- [Brigham Young](#) stated, "We are told that if we would give up **polygamy-- which we know to be a doctrine revealed from heaven and it is God** and the world for it--but suppose this Church should give up this holy order of

marriage, then would the devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 11:239). Later in the sermon President Young asked, 'Will the Latter-day Saints do this? No'.

- Mormon President John Taylor accused those who opposed polygamy within the LDS Church as "apostates." He said: "Where did this commandment come from in relation to polygamy? It also came from God...I **consider them apostates**, and not interested in this Church and kingdom" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 11:221).
- In 1869 Wilford Woodruff, Mormonism's future fourth president, taught, "**If we were to do away with polygamy...we must do away with prophets and Apostles, with revelation** and the gifts and graces of the Gospel, and finally give up our religion altogether and turn sectarians and do as the world does" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 13:165 - p.166).
- Joseph F. Smith insisted that plural marriage was essential for LDS exaltation. "This doctrine of eternal union of husband and wife, and of plural marriage, is **one of the most important doctrines ever revealed** to man in any age of the world. Without it man would come to a full stop; **without it we never could be exalted to associate with and become god...**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 21:9).
- Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt said, "**...if plurality of marriage is not true** or in other words, if a man has no divine right to marry two wives or more in this world, then marriage for eternity is not true, and **your faith is all vain**, and all the sealing ordinances, and powers, pertaining to marriages for eternity are vain, worthless, good for nothing; for as sure as one is true the other also must be true." ([Journal of Discourses](#), 21:296).
- Brigham Young stated: "Now **if any of you will deny the plurality of wives, and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned...**" ([Journal of Discourses](#), 3:266).
- President Wilford Woodruff signed what has come to be known as The Manifesto, or Declaration 1. The Manifesto can be found following section 138 in the Doctrine and Covenants. This document was basically a promise to the United States stating that the LDS Church would submit to the laws of the land and desist from solemnizing plural marriages.
- Joseph F. Smith: "Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation of mankind...I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that **every man in this Church who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned...**I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that" ([Journal of Discourses](#), vol.20, p.28-31).

This doctrine has been downplayed by recent church leaders but its stated

requirement for exaltation by the LDS founders can be well [documented](#).

- Bruce McConkie: "Obviously the holy practice will commence again after the Second Coming of the Son of Man and the ushering in of the millenium." (Mormon Doctrine, p. 578).

10. The Bible teaches that plural marriage is an abomination to God.

The clearest Biblical statement on polygamy **condemns** it as an abomination:

- "He [your king] shall never again return that way [to Egypt]. Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away" (Deut. 17:16-17).
- In I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6, polygamy disqualified a man from holding church office.

Although there are examples of men who practiced polygamy in the Old Testament, it is extremely important to note that polygamy was **merely tolerated by God, but never commanded or even endorsed** by Him.

- The mere fact that in the beginning God created just Eve for the companionship of Adam points to the monogamous relationship between a man and a woman.
- This is confirmed by such passages as I Corinthians 7:2 where the apostle Paul states that "every man should have his own wife," not wives.
- Jesus condoned monogamy when He stated "they two shall be one flesh." (Matthew 19:5) .
- polygamy violates the principle of God/Christ being married to one bride (Joel 2:16; Jn. 3:29; Rev. 19:7; 21:2-9).

In the Bible, polygamy is treated the same as divorce:

- "Because of the hardness of your heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way" (Matt. 19:8).

11. The Mormon churches teaches that it has been uniquely entrusted with administration of the priesthood. One of the unique doctrines of the Mormon church is its exclusive claim to the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. The priesthood is held by most male members 12 years and older. The Aaronic Priesthood was allegedly given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the

Baptist on May 15, 1829, and before August 1830 they received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Apostles Peter, James and John.

The structure of the LDS church is as follows: The first presidency (the prophet/president and his counselors) along with the men who are under them are called the [General Authorities](#). Each gets his authority for assigned responsibilities from the president/prophet while he is living. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, twelve men, just under the Prophet, also have the same **authority** and "**keys**" as the President, but can only partially use them as authorized by the President.

- [Joseph F. Smith](#) said: "What is a key? It is the right or privilege which belongs to and comes with the Priesthood, to have communication with God" (Gospel Doctrine, page 142).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "They [the keys] can only be fully used by the apostles when there is no president, and that historically has seldom happened for long periods. With no prophet (or when Jesus died) the apostles had the keys, all the authority ([Mormon Doctrine](#), pages 591, 49).

When the priesthood was allegedly restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery it was done by Peter, James and John, three of the apostles. Mormons maintain that the Apostle John is the only apostle, of the original twelve, left on earth. According to Mormonism John was to live until the Lord came ([Doctrine and Covenants](#) section 7). Mormons also cite the gospel of John as saying John would never die:

- "Jesus said to him [Peter], 'If I want him [John] to remain until I come, what is that to you?' (John 21:22).

Of course, John himself denies this in the next verse:

- "Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet **Jesus did not say to him that he would not die**, but only, '**If I want him to remain** until I come, what is that to you?'" (John 21:23).

The Mormons claim that, because John had all the "keys" (all authority), he could appoint and ordain new apostles and keep the Lord's church going on earth. Thus, holding the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood is their authority from God to act in his name and do his work. The LDS church maintains that Jesus gave the 12 apostles the authority to baptize but that Jesus did not give them the authority to pass on that authority to others. Thus, they teach that Christians lost their authority to baptize until the time when the priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith.

This Mormon doctrine is closely related to their teaching that the Christian church went through a [great apostasy](#) following the death of the original apostles (except

John).

- "Apostasy was universal...And this **darkness still prevails** except among those who have come to a knowledge of the restored gospel" ([Doctrines of Salvation](#), vol 3, p.265).
- [Bruce McConkie](#) states: "Thus the signs of the times include the **prevailing apostate darkness in the sects of Christendom** and in the religious world in general" (The Millennial Messiah, p.403); "a perverted Christianity holds sway among the so-called Christians of apostate Christendom" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.132); "virtually all the **millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves** before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ" ([Mormon Doctrine](#), p.269);

12. The Bible says that Jesus Christ has superceded all Old Testament priesthoods.

The authority claimed by the Mormon Church through an "Aaronic Priesthood," cannot be valid since Jesus abolished this priesthood when He took its place (Hebrews 7:11-19, 8:6-13). Likewise, the "Melchizedek Priesthood" never existed as any operative "priesthood", even in Old Testament times. No priestly succession is mentioned. Jesus is our only High Priest and He alone holds this permanently (Hebrews 7:15-28, 9:11-15).

Why is the idea of priests and priesthood important?

- The inevitable result of this Mormon teaching is that the person and work of Jesus Christ is minimized and given second place to the teaching that man himself will become a God. In Mormon doctrine, holding the office of the Melchizedek priesthood is essential to eternal progression so that without it celestial exaltation will not be achieved.
- Each occupant of the First Presidency, from Joseph Smith onward, has been the highest occupant of the Melchizedek priesthood. This contradicts the teaching of Hebrews chapters 7-9 and lessens the importance and uniqueness of Jesus.

Here is what the Bible says about the uniqueness of Jesus' priesthood:

- In these last days God speaks through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).
- Jesus is our only High Priest (Hebrews 7:15-28).
- He alone holds this permanently and no one else (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Jesus was not merely another in succession of priests, but His priesthood was unique. There had not been one like it before, and there will not be one like it again. His priesthood is the climax and culmination of priesthood before God.

Why was Jesus' priesthood unique? According to the Bible:

- Jesus' priesthood is superior due to a **better calling**. Other priests were chosen, but Jesus was called with an oath (Heb. 5:5; 7:21). God, who could swear by no greater than Himself, proclaimed Jesus to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- Jesus' priesthood is superior due to a **better covenant** (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:15). God found fault with the old covenant in that it could not accomplish the salvation of Israel. So He made a new covenant, and Jesus is the mediator of that covenant (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5-6).
- Jesus' priesthood is superior due to a **better sacrifice** (Heb. 9:11ff). Those who served in the Levitical priesthood offered sacrifices annually according to commandment. Those sacrifices did not serve to put away sin. Jesus, however, by one sacrifice, forever put away sin, and now sits at God the Father's right hand (Heb. 9:24ff; 10:12).
- Jesus' priesthood is unique due to an **indestructible life** (Heb. 7:16). Many men over several centuries served in the Levitical priesthood, yet none of them could continue because of death (Heb. 7:23-25).

Furthermore, the Bible states that **all Christians are now priests**:

- "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9).
- "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5).

The believer-as-a-priest concept is important because in other religions and in many cults a **priest serves as an essential intermediary between man and God**. A fundamental uniqueness of Christianity is that Jesus abolished this:

- "For there is one God and **one mediator** also between God and man, the Man **Christ Jesus**" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same **sacrifices, which can never take away sins**" (Heb 10:11), but "He [Jesus], having offered **one sacrifice for sins for all time**" (Heb. 10:12) "has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14) so that "There is **no longer any offering for sin**" (Heb. 10:18).
- Therefore, the Bible says that "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us through His Son" (Heb. 1:1).

13. Mormons teach that all men are children of God, hence there is a general salvation.

"All men and women are...literally sons and daughters of Deity" ([Gospel Principles](#), p. 11).

This doctrine is related to other Mormon teachings that claim:

- 'salvation' is universal,
- the [dead outside of Christ can get to heaven](#),
- there is [no eternal hell](#).

14. The Bible teaches that one becomes a child of God only through faith in Christ Jesus.

- "But as **many as received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:12).
- "For you [the Christians in Galatia to whom Paul is writing] are all **sons of God through faith** in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

The Mormon teaching that all men are children of God contradicts the clear teaching of the Bible that all men are inherently sinful and in need of redemption:

- "**All of us** like sheep have gone astray, **each of us** has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him" (Is. 53:6).
- "as it is written, there is **none** righteous, no **not one**" (Rom. 3:10).
- "You were **dead** in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Gal. 2:1-2).
- We "were by **nature** children of wrath, even as the rest" (Gal. 2:3).
- Outside of Christ, all are "darkened in their understanding, **excluded from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18).
- "Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. **You belong to your father, the devil**, and you want to carry out your father's desire'" (John 8:42-44).

- "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And I will declare to them, '**I never knew you; depart from Me**'" (Matt. 7:21-23).

If all men are by nature children of God as Mormon teaching suggests, then why, according to the Bible, must everyone who comes to Christ be transformed by God into a new creation with a new heart?

- "if any man is in Christ, he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away, behold **new things have come**" (2 Cor. 5:17).
- "Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the **new self who is being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:10).
- "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the **new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth" (Eph. 4:23-24).
- "However, you are **not in the flesh** but in the Spirit, if indeed the **Spirit of God dwells in you**" (Rom. 8:9).
- "It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**" (Gal. 2:20).
- "I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you, and I will remove the heart of stone...and I will put **My Spirit** within you and **cause you to walk in My statutes**" (Ezekiel. 36:26-27).

In the Bible, becoming a child of God is intimately linked with **placing our total trust in Him for salvation**. This is not something that happens to everyone but is clearly conditional:

- "Through His name **every one who believes in Him** has received forgiveness of sins " (Acts 10:43).
- "**He who hears my word and believes Him who sent Me** has eternal life and does not come into judgement" (Jn. 5:24).
- "**Every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him**, may have eternal life, and I myself will raise him up on the last day" (Jn. 6:40).
- "**As many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe on His name" (Jn. 1:12).

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