

When Mormon missionaries come to your door, even they sometimes make the point that the Mormon church is different than all other churches that claim to be Christian. We find that we must agree. Even though Mormonism says many of the same things that other churches say, a more detailed discussion usually reveals that the ideas behind many of the words are totally different than orthodox Christianity. Even though Mormons often display admirable traits in personal and family life, the doctrinal positions of the church itself cannot be harmonized with the teaching of the Bible.

Here are some key differences...

**Mormonism says:** God is the Supreme Being of the universe, but he has not always held that position. He gradually attained godhood by living a perfectly righteous life.

". . . We must accept the fact that **there was a time when Deity was much less powerful than He is today.** Then how did He become glorified and exalted and attain His present status of Godhood? In the first place, aeons ago God undoubtedly took advantage of every opportunity to learn the laws of truth and as He became acquainted with each new verity He righteously obeyed it. From day to day He exerted His will vigorously, and as a result became thoroughly acquainted with the forces lying about Him. As He gained more knowledge through persistent effort and continuous industry, as well as through absolute obedience, His understanding of the universal laws continued to become more complete. Thus He grew in experience and continued to grow **until He attained the status of Godhood.** In other words, He became God by absolute obedience to all the truth, and thereby became the author of eternal truth. Therefore, the road that the Eternal Father followed to Godhood was one

of living at all times a dynamic, industrious, and completely righteous life. There is no other way to exaltation." -Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages* (Salt Lake City: Steven & Wallis, 1945), pp. 114-115 (emphasis added).

Mormonism also teaches that God the Father has a body of flesh and bones.

"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also;..." -*Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:22.

**The Bible says:** God has existed eternally in perfection, and has never had less of His infinite power and wisdom than He has today. Adam was the first created man of flesh.

**Mormonism says:** Jesus and Satan, like the rest of us, were spirit brothers and sons of God before the spirit of Jesus was given a body by Mary in Bethlehem. The Mormon "Book of Moses" presents Satan and Jesus as contending for the privilege of taking a body of flesh in order to become the redeemer, with Jesus winning the contest. [See Joseph Smith, *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 4:1-4.]

Mormonism teaches that Jesus was the physical son of God the Father and Mary, and that there is nothing in His life more than what is attainable by anyone else.

"When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus... he was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is his Father? He is the first of the human family . . . Jesus our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden." - Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:50-51, as cited in Gordon H. Fraser, *Is Mormonism Christian?* (Chicago: Moody, 1955), p.58.

**"His humanity is to be recognized as real and ordinary** ...whatever happened to him may happen to any one of us . . . The divinity

of Jesus, and the divinity of all other noble and stately souls, in so far as they, too, have been influenced by a spark of Deity - can be recognized as manifestations of the Divine." -Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1883).

**The Bible says:** Jesus Christ has existed eternally as God the second Person of the Trinity, and then took on a human nature at His birth in Bethlehem. Since then He exists eternally as one Person with both divine and human natures.

**Mormonism says:** All human beings and spirits, including Jesus and Satan, existed as spirit beings before being born. Physical birth gives bodies to these spirits, and an opportunity to choose right or wrong. Thus the present life is a period of probation. The way a person lives in this life determines their status in the life after the resurrection. If the deeds of this life have been satisfactory and all temple obligations have been fulfilled, the individual becomes a god and is considered eligible to create "spirit children" as God the Father did and populate a world of his own.

**The Bible says:** There is no pre-existence of human spirits in an earlier life before our earthly existence; the Bible does not teach this in any form. And humanity is permanently on a lower level than God. Though we may become like Him in moral purity in heaven, we never become infinite in regard to time, space or ability. And the Bible says nothing about populating other worlds - simply about the future kingdom of Christ and the New Jerusalem on this world (Revelation 21-22).

**Mormonism says:** The Mormon church uses the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* as their primary authority, with the addition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *The Pearl of Great Price*.

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God." -Articles of Faith, 8.

The LDS "Living Prophet" can speak oracles which actually supercede scripture and any previous prophet's oracles, including Joseph Smith. The Bible holds the least amount of authority in the Mormon church.

**The Bible says:** God's Word (the Bible) alone is authoritative.

**Mormonism says** that Christ overcame physical death and guaranteed physical resurrection to all mankind. But spiritual death can only be avoided by individual obedience to the commandments of God. "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, **by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.** ... We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost." - Articles of Faith, 3 and 4 (emphasis added). Forgiveness of sins requires baptism by an approved Mormon priest. The practice of baptism for the dead is an extension of this belief, in which Mormons are baptized in proxy for those who have died without proper baptism.

**The Bible says:** We are unable to live a life righteous enough to meet God's standard of perfect holiness. Therefore we become right with God by faith in the work of Christ, not by our own works. Baptism and holy living are acts of obedience to God, but not a means of gaining salvation.

**Mormonism says:** Although there is some form of punishment (possibly temporary) for those that are most wicked, Christ will usher

in a kingdom that will consist of three levels by the end of the millennium: the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the telestial kingdom. It is possible to advance within each of these kingdoms.

**The Bible only speaks** of two final fates for mankind: heaven or hell. And nothing is said of advancing in status in either location.



## What are the differences between Mormonism and Christianity?

*"If a faith will not bear to be investigated; if its preachers and professors are afraid to have it examined; their foundation must be very weak."*  
-- (Journal of Discourses 14:216-217)