

SEVEN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MORMONISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Introduction

The purpose of this is to let you know seven differences between Mormonism and traditional Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox). Many would think that Mormonism is simply a part of Christianity, particularly since they are called “The Church of *JESUS CHRIST* of Latter-day Saints” (emphasis added). The problem is that we, as traditional Christians, think that Mormonism is teaching another Jesus than what the Bible teaches (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15).

The Seven Differences

1. Mormon scripture teaches that *all* the various Christian denominations, particularly the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, are all considered by Jesus Christ to be “wrong.” When the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. was questioning, as a 14-year-old boy, which of these churches to join, he claimed,

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all *wrong*; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an *abomination* in his sight; that those professors were all *corrupt*; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof’ (Joseph Smith--History 1:19, *Pearl of Great Price*, emphasis added, cf. 1:9).

Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth (1 Nephi 14:10, *Book of Mormon*).

2. Mormon scripture, prophets and apostles teach that there is more than one god who created this world, that there are many gods who rule over other worlds, and that worthy Mormons may one day become gods themselves. Even though Mormons claim there is only one God for them, they still believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate gods who are only one in their purpose rather than in a personal being that they share eternally.

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, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 576-7).

Here, then, is eternal life--to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another... until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 346-7).¹ “As man is God once was, as God is man may be” (Prophet Lorenzo Snow, *The Life of Lorenzo Snow* by Thomas C. Romney, 46). “And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth” (Abraham 4:1, *The Pearl of Great Price*).

3. Mormon scripture, prophets and apostles teach that God the Father is an exalted man with flesh and bones.

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! ...I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form--like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; ...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 (Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345). “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22).

4. Mormon prophets and apostles teach that God the Father has *at least one wife* by which we were all literally born from as spirit children prior to coming to this earth. Some of these prophets and

apostles have even taught that Jesus had wives and children.

This glorious truth of celestial parentage, including specifically both a Father and a Mother, is heralded forth by song in one of the greatest of Latter-day Saint hymns. *O My Father* by Eliza R. Snow, written in 1843 during the lifetime of the Prophet, includes this teaching: *In the heavens are parents single? No; the thought makes reason stare! Truth is reason, truth eternal, Tells me I’ve a Mother there. When I leave this frail existence, When I lay this mortal by, Father, Mother, may I meet you In your royal courts on high?* (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 516-7).

We have now clearly shown that God the Father had a plurality of wives, one or more being in eternity, by whom He begot our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born, and another being upon the earth by whom He begat the tabernacle of Jesus, as His Only Begotten in this world. 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 were to be married (Apostle Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, 172).

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* (Prophet Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, 50).

NOTE: Most Mormons are unaware that Brigham Young in fact taught that Adam was the God of this world. Only members of fundamentalist Mormon groups (not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) hold to this doctrine today. Regardless of this identification of God as being Adam, no one denies that Young believed that God the Father has more than one wife.

5. Mormon prophets and apostles teach that God the Father had a Father whom He followed as Jesus had followed Him. This follows from the preceding points.

If Abraham reasoned thus—If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a

progenitor? And everything comes in this way. ...Hence if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that *He* had a Father also? I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine, for the Bible is full of it.

I want you to pay particular attention to what I am saying. Jesus said that the Father wrought precisely in the same way as His Father had done before Him. As the Father had done before? He laid down His life, and took it up the same as His Father had done before (Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 373).

6. Mormon prophets and apostles teach that there are many things that Jesus did not create. For example, He did not create our spirits, nor did He create Lucifer, nor did He even create the planet that He was born on as a spirit. The reason for this is because Mormons believe that Jesus and Lucifer are literally brothers, and we as humans are all the younger brothers and sisters of them. We were all born of heavenly parents, who did the creating work of their world (not all worlds whatsoever) before we arrived spiritually in heaven.

The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind (Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, 15).

7. Mormon prophets and apostles teach that we should not pray directly to Jesus. Rather, they can only pray directly to the Father in the name of Jesus.

Apostle Bruce McConkie said concerning the Father,

He is the one to whom we have direct access by prayer, and if there were some need -- which there is not -- to single out one member of the Godhead, for a special relationship, the Father, not the Son, would be the one to choose. Our relationship with the Son is one of brother or sister in the pre-mortal life.

Referring to "others who have an excessive zeal,"

McConkie went on to say that

they devote themselves to gaining a special, personal relationship with Christ that is both improper and perilous. ...Another peril is that those so involved often begin to pray directly to Christ because of some special friendship they feel has been developed.

...This is plain sectarian nonsense. Our prayers are addressed to the Father and to Him only (*BYU Devotional* [March 2, 1982], 17, 19 & 20).

A Christian Response

Some Mormons may quibble that some of these sources are non-scriptural, and are thus simply the opinions of men with no binding authority. But the Bible says that if so-called prophets and apostles teach other gods than what God has already clearly revealed about Himself, we are to consider them to be false (cf. Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15; & Galatians 1:6-9). What difference does it make if the preceding sources are deemed by the Mormon Church to be scriptural or not? If this is truly what they taught, then it seems quite obvious that these individuals are not teaching the God of the Bible, and thus should be considered as **non-Christian** (i.e., they are not following the true Christ).

Mormons also quibble that the Bible is full of errors and has been through many a translation such that many "plain and precious truths" have been left out of the translation we have today. Thus, Mormons unquestionably rest their faith in what their church tells them to believe, so long as they receive affirmation from what is called a "burning in their bosoms." Christians, on the other hand, find no reason to think that many truths have been taken from Scripture. Why is it that all the various manuscripts of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Scriptures, from which all the various versions come, are remarkably consistent with each other? Where is all the evidence that these manuscripts were cut up in such a way so as to delete the "plain and precious truths" found today in the restored Mormon Scriptures? Christians find no reason to doubt the words of the Lord Jesus when He said, "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), and "[h]eaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away" (Mat. 24:35). It is the word of God, not our "burning in our bosoms," that is a light to our path (Psalms 119:105).

The Christian interpretation of the Bible teaches that there was *only one* Being (not a team of Gods that formed a Godhead) who did the creation work of any world in the *entire universe* (not some proper subset of it) (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6, 8, **24**; 45:12; & 46:9). Of course other "gods" are mentioned in Scripture, but they are consistently referred to as false gods or idols that are not gods by nature (Ps. 96:5; 1 Cor. 8:1-6; & Gal. 4:8). (Some Mormons have attempted to support their polytheism by likening themselves to early Christian fathers and other Christian theologians in their view of the *deification* of humans. But the latter still believe in only one *true* God by nature, and hold that humans can never attain the unique features of God like omnipotence, eternity, omnipresence, etc. Consequently, *Christian* deification does not teach that humans can *literally* become gods. Instead, it teaches that humans are "deified" in the sense that the Holy Spirit

transforms Christian believers into the image of God, modeled perfectly in the human nature of Christ, by endowing them in the resurrection with immortality and God's perfect *moral* character.)

The Bible also teaches that God is not *limited* to a body that He *needs* to become a God. He is too great for a body (1 Kings 8:27 & Jn. 4:21-24). He is God *unchangeably* from everlasting to everlasting (Malachi 3:6 & Ps. 90:2). This is why God has a completely different nature from man. He is not a mere man, nor an exalted man, since He is not a man at all (Hosea 11:9).

The Bible also teaches that Jesus created everything that was ever created from the beginning of heaven and earth (Jn. 1:1-3, 14 & Colossians 1:15-18). Hence, wherever humans or Lucifer were made, they were all made by Jesus. This is why Christians have no problem praying to Jesus (cf. Stephen's prayer in Acts 7:59). Jesus told us not just to pray to the Father, but to Himself as well (Jn. 14:14—Greek says, "If you ask *me* anything in my name, I will do it"). Whether Jesus is physically present or not is irrelevant, since He claimed to be with us always anyway (Mat. 18:20 & 28:20). Though He became fully man, He has always been fully God and ought to be treated as such (Jn. 1:1 & 14; 5:18 & 23; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:5-10; Col. 2:9; Revelation 1:8, 17-18; & 22:6-20). Since Jesus is the only Son of God with the *nature* of God ("only begotten" in Greek means "one of a *kind* or *genus*"), He is God the Son (Jn. 1:18).

More specifically, He is the *second* person of God. The Christian God is more than one person; *He* is actually three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who are not unlike radically connected Siamese twins (compare Isa. 44:24 with Genesis 1:26--the being of God created *alone* with the plurality of persons that His being is comprised of). There was never a time when one of the persons was without the others. They are eternally distinct persons while eternally inseparable in being as well as purpose.

Your eternal salvation depends on whether you really know God or not. Jesus said, "[I]f ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24). Please consider praying to God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit), asking Him to cleanse you from all your sins, particularly of following another god and another Jesus, and then repent from those idols by leaving the Mormon Church. Then please consider committing yourself to a genuinely "Christian" denomination in order to grow in your new spiritual life.

1. All citations to *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* use the pre-2002 edition.

R. M. Sivulka
Rob@MormonInfo.org
www.MormonInfo.org