

What's the Difference?

A side-by-side comparison of the essential differences between BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY & MORMON DOCTRINE

Position represented by the Statement of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals.

1. "We believe the *Holy Bible* to be the inspired, the only infallible authoritative Word of God."

"And from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim 3: 15,16 Strong's Concordance translates inspiration as "god-breathed". As God's breath can come only from God himself, so also His inspired word: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet 1: 21

2. "We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Israel's covenant with God is known as the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:" Deut 6: 4 Use of the singular verb (is) with a plural noun is not good grammar. How they can be one in divine nature and essence is a mystery. (Rom 16: 25; Col 4: 3; Eph 6: 19) This can only be revealed by the Spirit. (Eph 3: 3, 5) "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor 2: 14

Official position represented by teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

1. "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." Article of Faith, #8

The Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are called "The Standard Works". Joseph Smith claims to have received most of these works "by revelation" (not inspiration).

The canon is open to further revelation: "The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works." Ezra Taft Benson, "The Fourteen Fundamentals of Following the Prophets" in a speech before the BYU student body, February. 26, 1980

2. "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods." Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 370; also History of the Church, Vol 6, p. 474 and "Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel", missionary training, 1986

"And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth." Pearl of Great Price, Book of Abraham 4: 1

BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

3. "We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through his shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory."

a. Concerning His deity: "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col 2: 9; also Jo 1: 1-14

b. Jesus has always been God: "...the word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1: 1; For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible." Col 1: 16; John 1: 3 The theme of Hebrews is the pre-eminence of Jesus.

c. Concerning His virgin birth: "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:" Luke 1: 35 According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, overshadow in Greek means "to invest with a miraculous influence."

d. Concerning His atoning death through his shed blood: "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself... In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight." Col 1: 20, 22; also 1 Pet 2: 1: 19; 24; Rev. 5: 9, etc., etc.

Conclusion: to deny what the word says about who He is is to teach damnable heresy. (2 Pet 2: 1) Those who refuse to confess the biblical Jesus have the "spirit of antichrist". 1 John 4:3; 2:22

MORMON DOCTRINE

3. Mormon doctrine espouses a different Jesus:

a. He earned his deity: "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, May 6, 1833 - And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness;" D & C 93: 12-14

b. He is a literal "Son of God, in the spirit: "Among the spirit children of Elohim, the first-born was and is Jehovah, or Jesus Christ, to whom all others are juniors." Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine, p. 70; Doctrine and Covenants 93: 21, 23

c. He is the literal "Son of God" in the flesh: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the most literal sense. The body in which he performed His mission in the flesh was sired by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father." President Ezra Taft Benson, Come Unto Christ, 1983, p.4. Also Doctrines of Salvation, Vol 1, p. 18; Joseph Fielding Smith, Religious Truths Defined, p. 44

d. The Mormon Jesus atoned in the garden through suffering, (not death): "Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit - and would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink - Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." D & C 19: 18, 19; also "The Restoration of Major Doctrines through Joseph Smith", The Ensign, Jan, 1989, p. 29; D of Salvation, Vol 1, p. 130

BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

4. "We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential."

"All have sinned; ...there is none righteous, no not one" Romans 3: 23, 10; Jesus "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb 9: 26; also Rom 5: 9; for, "...without the shedding of blood is no remission." Heb 9: 22; "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." Heb 9: 20; 13: 20 "... he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Heb 9: 15 (Old covenant involved priesthood, law and ritual cleansing.)

The promise of "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3: 5, 6) has this condition: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3: 16; also John 5: 24, Acts 4: 12, Eph 2: 8, etc.

5. "We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose in-dwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life."

Paul prayed for believers, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" Eph 3: 16, 17a The Holy Spirit is given to them that ask Luke 11: 13, contingent upon our faith in the name of Jesus. Heb 11: 6; John 14: 6 Therefore, His indwelling is by invitation, not by ordination.

MORMON DOCTRINE

4. Sinful man receives eternal blessings through the LDS church organization by authority of their Melchizedek Priesthood: "And all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; ...And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood..." Doctrine and Covenants 84: 33-44; also 121: 36 "... 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. ...And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant (through temple marriage), it was instituted for the fulness of my glory;" Doctrine and Covenants 132: 4, 6a

"If persons separate themselves from the Lord's church, they thereby separate themselves from his means of salvation, for salvation is through the Church. ... What is so precious as salvation? And how is it to be obtained? Only through the church and 'being anxiously engaged' in its program." Elder Mark E Peterson, *The Ensign*, July, 1975

5. The Holy Ghost is given to new members as an ordinance by the laying on of hands at the time of confirmation: "And to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost;" *History of the Church*, Vol 3, p. 379 In this ordinance, the Holy Ghost is bestowed as a "constant companion..." D & C 121: 46; he "walks beside".

Joseph Smith said, "... the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false." D & C 130: 3

BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

6. "We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5: 28-29

This verse makes it very clear that all are resurrected, but judgement to life or death is based on an individual's faith in the blood of Jesus as the personal means of reconciliation to God. Rom 3: 25; Rev 5: 9

Another major difference: ...believers are delivered from the law, Rom 7: 6 Jesus has forgiven them all trespasses, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, ...and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross...." Col 2: 14; Read Col, chapters 1 & 2!

7. "We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ."

Believers are born into His family by faith in His word. 1 Pet 1: 23; Ja 1: 18 A spiritual unity of faith is possible only with those who have come to the true God through His inspired word. (1 Cor 1: 10; Eph 5: 11; Phil'p 1: 27, 28; 1 Tim 6: 3-5; 2 Cor 6: 14, 17; 1 Cor 12: 13)

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This side-by-side comparison has clearly shown how Mormonism is different: Mormon prophets have said, "Let us go and follow other gods." Deut 13: 13; 18: 20 Mormon doctrine teaches another (different) Jesus and another gospel: again, warnings are found in 2Cor 11: 4, 13; Gal 1: 6-9. False teachings cause people to "stumble at the word". 1 Pet 2: 8; Isa 8: 14 "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24: 15

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MORMON DOCTRINE

6. "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel"

Article of Faith, #3

This is a universal atonement without the Biblical condition of faith: "...all are redeemed by the Savior's self-sacrifice from the individual consequences of the fall." James

Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 85

"The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings" D & C 107: 18 Those who will be fully reconciled to God, "will be redeemed through obedience to the (laws and) ordinances of the house of God." D & C 138: 58

7. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints excludes all other groups and peoples, espousing itself as "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth;" D & C 1: 30

"Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the *summum bonum* of the whole subject that is laying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood." Doctrine and Covenants 128: 11-12 Therefore, receiving the priesthood is the ultimate qualification for spiritual unity: "And... they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; ...But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it,...shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come." Doctrine and Covenants 84: 33-44; also 39: 4-6; 76: 31-38