

Mormonism

- Review 4 things that separate Christianity from all other religions

Facts

- The official name of the church is "the Church of Jesus Christ of _____".
- There are over _____ million Mormons. Most live in _____ and most American Mormons live in _____.
- Started by _____ in the early 1800's. He had visions from an angel who told him that the truth is written on golden plates buried near his home and he needed to translate them.
 - 2 Corinthians 11:14 "even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."
 - To test him, his neighbor pretended to lose the messages and asked for another translation to see if it matched, but then there were new plates with new messages.
- The angel (conveniently) took the plates back when Joseph was done with them. These translations became the _____ in 1830.
- Joseph Smith "retranslated" the Bible - taking out all that didn't make sense to him (he did not know Greek or Hebrew).
 - As an aside, this is a hallmark of cult leaders > saying the church and scripture is corrupted, the gospel has been lost and I am bringing the right message
- Mormonism had a number of issues with its leadership
 - Multiple warrants for Joseph Smith's arrest (bank fraud)
 - Polygamy (Joseph Smith had 25-50 wives) > caused trouble amongst leaders
 - Believed the Garden of Eden was in Jackson County, MO and fought against the Missouri State Militia.
 - The next leader Brigham Young had 55 wives and moved the headquarters to Utah.
 - Also went to war with the US.

Beliefs

God > God was first _____ on another planet who became a god because he obeyed the god of that planet.

- He lives with his wives from his planet who are now our "heavenly mothers"
- God created the world out of what existed before and now rules this world.

Scripture > The Book of Mormon is the "most correct" book in the world.

- Story of a Jew who fled to _____ in 600 BC from Israel where they were cursed with "blackness" and became the primary ancestors of the American Indians.
- They believe the Bible is the word of God as far as it is translated correctly. Smith preached the "restored gospel" and that the Bible had been corrupted.
- Brigham young claimed that every sermon he gave was scripture.
- New revelation from Mormon president can overrule any previous doctrine.

Jesus > Jesus is the first "spirit child", the product of sexual relations between God and one of the heavenly mothers. Satan was the second-born child to God and then the rest of humanity.

- Jesus is not God and is not eternal. There is no trinity.
- Jesus after rising from the dead went to _____ and preached the Mormon gospel to the people and started the Mormon church.

Us > The goal is for man to become a god and rule over his own world.

- We are all first spirit children which we have no memory of but God made a way for us to be gods by becoming humans so that we could do what god has already done.
 - So, is Mormonism monotheistic or polytheistic?
- Forgiveness of sins by works > exaltation happens by being a good Mormon
- They also believe that everyone is "saved" but your life determines which level of heaven you go to

Summary

Even though they call Jesus Savior, they say he atones for sins, they say they worship him, they deny scripture, deny the trinity, deny that Jesus is God, deny that we have a sinful nature, deny salvation by faith alone, and deny a final judgment.

- 97% of Mormons believe they are a Christian religion

- President Brigham Young said, "We, the Latter-day Saints, take the liberty of believing more than our Christian brethren: we not only believe ... the Bible, but ... the whole of the plan of salvation that Jesus has given to us. Do we differ from others who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? No, only in believing more."
- Mormons try to say that they are Christianity plus a few other things (they try to downplay the differences) when in fact Mormonism is an attack on everything that Christianity believes.

Answers

- The official name of the church is "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints".
- There are over 15 million Mormons. Most live in the US and most American Mormons live in Utah.
- Started by Joseph Smith in the early 1800's.
- These translations became the book of Mormon in 1830.
- God > God was first a man on another planet who became a god because he obeyed the god of that planet.
- Story of a Jew who fled to America in 600 BC from Israel where they were cursed with "blackness" and became the primary ancestors of the American Indians.
- Jesus after rising from the dead went to America and preached the Mormon gospel to the people and started the Mormon church.

- **Identifying problems** > The hard thing about cults is that they say a lot of things that seem right but we have to listen and read carefully to know what they actually mean. You can say the same things that Christians say but mean something completely different. We have to remember what sets Christianity apart (becoming so familiar with “the real” thing) so that we won’t be led astray.

“Are Mormons Christians?” article written by a Mormon.

(<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/1998/05/are-mormons-christians?lang=eng>)

“But there are sincere people out there who believe the Latter-day Saints aren’t Christians. In fact, the accusation that we are not Christians is probably the most commonly heard criticism of the LDS Church and its doctrines today. Why would anyone say such a thing? Isn’t the name of our church The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Do we not worship Christ? Is not the Book of Mormon another testament of Jesus Christ? How could anyone seriously doubt that Latter-day Saints are Christians?”

The Doctrinal Exclusion

This type of argument claims that since the Latter-day Saints do not always interpret the Bible as other Christians do, we must not be Christians. But, in fact, other denominations also differ among themselves doctrinally, and it is unreasonable to demand that Latter-day Saints conform to a single standard of “Christian” doctrine when no such single standard exists.

For example, the Latter-day Saints are accused of worshipping a “different god” because we do not believe in the traditional Trinity. “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (A of F 1:1) as taught in the New Testament. What Latter-day Saints do not believe is the non-Biblical doctrine formulated by the councils of Nicaea (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) centuries after the time of Jesus—the doctrine that God is three coequal persons in one substance or essence. We do not believe it because it is not scriptural. As Harper’s Bible Dictionary states: ‘The formal doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found in the New Testament.’

Jesus didn’t teach the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity. The New Testament writers didn’t have any idea of it. The doctrine itself wasn’t invented until centuries later. So one can’t say the Latter-day Saints are not true Christians for not accepting it, unless one also excludes Jesus, his disciples, and the New Testament Church, who similarly did not know or teach it.

Finally, quite often we hear that Latter-day Saints are not Christians because true Christians believe in salvation by grace, while the Latter-day Saints believe in salvation through our own good works. But this is a misunderstanding. Yes, Latter-day Saints do believe we must serve God with all our “heart, might, mind, and strength” (D&C 4:2). But the Book of Mormon makes perfectly clear that it is impossible for us to completely earn or deserve our blessings from God (Mosiah 2:21, 24); that redemption can never come through individual effort alone, but only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (2 Ne. 2:3, 5–8); and that—after all we can do (Alma 24:11)—we are saved by grace (2 Ne. 10:24; 2 Ne. 25:23).”

- What are some things wrong here?

What's wrong?

Doctrine and Covenants 4:2 "Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day."

- What's wrong?

- 1 Thess. 5:23-24 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

Alma 24:11 "And now behold, my brethren, since it has been all that we could do (as we were the most lost of all mankind) to repent of all our sins and the many murders which we have committed, and to get God to take them away from our hearts, for it was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God that he would take away our stain"

- What's wrong?

- Titus 3:4-6 "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior"

2 Nephi 10:24 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved."

2 Nephi 25:23 "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."

- What's wrong?

- 2 Cor. 5:17-18 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself"

- Romans 5:10 "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

2 Nephi 2:5-8 "Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered. Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise."

- What's hard about Christianized cults is that they will use a lot of words and phrases that we are familiar with that may not say anything wrong. This passage is a mash-up of a dozen different Bible words and phrases so it may not say anything wrong, but we must know the whole picture of a religion, and that they do not believe in the 3 essential beliefs of Christianity.