

# Mormons Are Not Christians

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I want to make clear that there is no political agenda behind this article. I started planning this article because of a media blitz undertaken by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (commonly called Mormons) in the United States to try to convince people that Mormons are Christians. Then, before I had even started the article, the news was filled with headlines that Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain took a back-handed swipe at Republican rival Mitt Romney by saying in essence that Romney would not be able to win the southern states because Romney is a Mormon (the implication being that Mormons are not Christians). Then, just as Cain seemed to be backing away from his statements, Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, and a known supporter of Texas Governor Rick Perry, who is also a Republican presidential candidate, made similar headlines. His statements were more direct. He said that Mitt Romney is not a Christian and that Mormonism is a cult. He also said that God will judge America if it elects a Mormon president. Perry then distanced himself from Jeffress and indicated in vague statements that he believed that if Romney says he is a Christian, then he is.

Thus, even before I began writing this article, the question of whether Mormonism is Christian became a political issue. But my intention in writing this article is not to deal with a political issue. I am not trying to influence your votes. My concern is not with a presidential election. My concern is that some Christians actually believe that Mormons are fellow Christians. I did not write the title of this article as a question, "Are Mormons Christians?" because I want no misunderstandings. I want to show you statements from websites run by the Mormons and their Brigham Young University (BYU) that, when compared to the Bible, should make a Christian instantly know that Mormons are not Christians.

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Suppose John says he is an evolutionist. Rick, who is an evolutionist, says, "Cool, I'll look into what John says about evolution." But as Rick looks into the things John has written about his beliefs, he finds that John believes in a literal six-day creation by the God of the Bible, except that John calls this six-day creation, "evolution." Not only that, but John labels as "false evolutionists" those who believe the commonly accepted understanding of evolution and says they are using "corrupted information." Rick says, "Hey John, you're not an evolutionist. You're a creationist." John says, "No, I'm an evolutionist." Rick says, "But you believe in a literal six-day creation." John says, "No. I call it evolution. So, I'm an evolutionist." This is a situation similar to what we find in the question of whether Mormons are Christians.

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mormons.pdf

Certainly, Mormons say that they are Christians. In fact, they name Jesus Christ in the official name of their church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. But is naming the name enough? Certainly, the name of Jesus Christ is important: "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). But Jesus Himself said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23). These people will have done many things in *Jesus' name*, but Jesus will deny knowing them. As I showed in the example of John and Rick, a name alone is not enough. It is what you believe about that name that is important; it is how you define that name.

### **1. Mormons don't believe in the same God as Christians.**

In the 13 Articles of Faith listed on their website (<http://mormon.org/articles-of-faith/>), Mormons list the first article as saying, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." At first, this might sound okay. You see all three members of the Trinity mentioned. But notice what is missing. They are not mentioned as being members of the Trinity. A basic formulation of the Trinity doctrine is, God is a Trinity of three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. The Mormon statement says nothing like this. Mormons don't believe in one God in three Persons. Mormons believe in many gods. Mormons are polytheists. (If you want to see why the Trinity is a biblical doctrine, see my article, "Why Christians Believe in the Trinity" <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/trinity.html>.)

The Mormons own explanation of this statement says, "These three beings make up the Godhead. They preside over this world and all other creations of our Father in Heaven" (page "Godhead" <http://lds.org/study/topics/godhead?lang=eng>). This page goes on to call these beings "distinct beings with distinct roles."

On the page, "God the Father" (<http://lds.org/study/topics/god-the-father?lang=eng>), Mormons say that God the Father "has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." But Christians believe Jesus when He says, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

In the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, we read this: "The Prophet Joseph Smith said, 'It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us: yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did' (TPJS, pp. 345-46). Further, 'God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret.' (TPJS, p. 345)" (page "God" <http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/God>; TPJS refers to *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* <http://www.boap.org/LDS/Joseph-Smith/Teachings/>). Moreover, on the page "Godhood" (<http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Godhood>) we read, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that all resurrected and perfected mortals become gods.... To become more like God, individuals must gain increased light and truth and follow all the commandments that God has given.... People qualify themselves for this rank and degree of exaltation by bringing themselves fully in line with all that God has commanded them to do." So, to Mormons, God is distinct beings who are not only God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, but also millions of others who can attain to that rank by works.

## **2. Mormons don't believe in the same Jesus as Christians.**

Obviously, from what we have read, to Mormons, Jesus Christ is not the Second Person of the Trinity. The page "Jesus Christ" in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* ([http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Jesus\\_Christ](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Jesus_Christ)) states, "In the premortal life, Jesus Christ, whose main title was Jehovah, was the firstborn spirit child of God the Father and thus the eldest brother and preeminent above all other spirit children of God. In that first estate, he came to be more intelligent than all other spirits." The obvious implications of this statement are that there was a time before Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ is a created being.

But the Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-2, 14). These verses say that the one who became flesh, Jesus Christ, was in the beginning with God and was God. There is no room in these verses to be interpreted as Jesus being born a spirit child of the Father.

Another way in which Mormons don't believe in the same Jesus Christ as Christians is that they don't believe that Jesus Christ alone saves. To Mormons, salvation is by our works (see the next point).

### **3. Mormons don't believe in the same Gospel as Christians. Mormons believe in a works salvation.**

The third article of the 13 Articles of Faith reads, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." Notice that this is only saying that the atonement of Christ made it possible for man to be saved by obedience to laws and ordinances. Read this from the Mormon page, "Jesus Christ Is the Way" (<http://lds.org/plan/jesus-christ-is-the-way?lang=eng>):

If we believe in Jesus Christ, follow His teachings, and repent when we commit sins, His Atonement, or sacrifice, can wash us clean of our sins and make us worthy to return to God's presence. Christ's sacrifice and Resurrection also allow us to overcome physical death. Every one of us will be resurrected just like Christ was and live forever in perfected bodies after we leave this life.

Each of us will be resurrected and overcome physical death regardless of what we do in this life. But we have to do our part to overcome spiritual death.

To be forgiven of our sins, we need to repent and increase our faith in Jesus Christ throughout our lives. We will not be saved simply because we get baptized or say we believe in Jesus Christ. It takes work, but the work we do doesn't only prepare us for heaven, it blesses us in this life too.

Did you catch what this is saying? At first it says that Jesus' atonement washes us clean of sin, which overcomes physical death only. But then it also says to be "forgiven of our sins, we need to repent and increase our faith in Jesus Christ throughout our lives." Then it goes on to clearly state, "We will not be saved simply because we...say we believe in Jesus Christ. *It takes work*, but the work we do doesn't only prepare us for heaven, it blesses us in this life too" (emphasis mine). Notice two things about this. First, it says that we will not be saved simply because we believe in Jesus Christ. Yet Mormons tell the media that they are Christians because they believe in Jesus Christ. That is

hypocrisy. Second, This statement reveals very clearly that Mormons teach a works salvation. The salvation they talk of here is not accomplished entirely by Jesus Christ alone. It is earned by works. Of a similar, works-oriented gospel that was being purveyed to the Galatians, Paul wrote,

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:6-9

It is true that we are not saved simply because we say we believe in Jesus Christ. That leaves the question, What do we believe about Jesus Christ? What about Jesus are we putting our belief in? The Bible teaches that we are saved because by the gift of the instrument of faith, we lay hold of the justification that Jesus, because of his perfect obedience, was able to provide for us (for more information read my recent "By Faith Alone" article here <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/endofreformation2.htm>). To a Christian, Jesus Christ has completely procured the believer's salvation. He has done all of the work. To a Mormon, salvation is obtained by the Mormon's continuous obedience to a formula of works that does not end until death.

#### **4. Mormons don't believe in the same Scriptures as Christians.**

The eighth article of the 13 Articles of Faith says, "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." This is a very incomplete statement that hides the fact that Mormons believe the Bible to be corrupt.

The article "Bible" (<http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Bible>) in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* says,

In addition to difficulties associated with translating from ancient to modern languages, other scriptures [Mormon scriptures] also declare that some parts of the original biblical text have been lost or corrupted (e.g., 1 Ne. [1

Nephi] 13:28-29; D&C [Doctrine and Covenants] 6:26-27;93:6-18). Joseph Smith commented on the Bible's incompleteness: "It was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled" (TPJS, pp. 10-11). He later said, "Much instruction has been given to man since the beginning which we do not possess now.... We have what we have, and the Bible contains what it does contain" (TPJS, p. 61). The Prophet Joseph further stated, "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" (TPJS, p. 327). Thus, the elements of mistranslation, incompleteness, and other errors weaken the Bible; but the spirit of its messages still reveals enough of God's word to fulfill his appointed purposes. Joseph Smith summarized thus: "Through the kind providence of our Father a portion of His word which He delivered to His ancient saints, has fallen into our hands [and] is presented to us with a promise of a reward if obeyed, and with a penalty if disobeyed" (TPJS, p. 61). Latter-day Saints have continued to trust in the general accuracy of the biblical texts even though they know that that text may not always be correct. Thus, they study and revere the Bible, especially in the context of other scriptures and modern revelation, which have much to say about the Bible and how it is to be interpreted, and as they study they ponder and pray that they may receive inspiration from God and come to understand the Bible's messages as they need to be applied in their lives (cf. Moro. [Moroni] 10:3-5).

The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article "Scriptures" (<http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Scriptures>) greatly elaborates: "The corpus of LDS scripture is substantially larger than that of the traditional Protestant canon. It includes the Bible, the Book of Mormon (531 pages, 1981 English edition), the Doctrine and Covenants (294 pages, 1981 edition), and the Pearl of Great Price (61 pages, 1981 edition)." In fact, it also says, "Although 'scripture' usually denotes written documents, in LDS sources it is also defined as 'whatsoever [God's representatives] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost'." (The bracketed insertion "[God's representatives]" above is on the BYU website. It is not my insertion.)

In other words, to Mormons, Scripture is not just the Bible. In fact, the Bible is corrupt. And, when all is said and done, Scripture is whatever Mormon leaders say it is. But Christians believe in the Bible alone and that it is a closed canon. Otherwise, what is to stop any Tom, Dick, or Harry—or Joseph—from coming along and saying he has a new revelation? God has not left us in such a state of chaos. He has preserved His Word for us to this day. It is the 66 books of the Old and New Testament.

Think about this. The only reason that Mormonism exists is because it is a rejection of biblical Christianity. Mormonism was created to *differentiate* it from Christianity. If Mormons believed the Bible to be right, then there would be no need for the Book of Mormon and other writings correcting the Bible. If, according to Mormon thinking, Christians who believe in the Bible alone were right, then there would be no need for Mormonism. Thus, logically, as much as Mormons try to cry foul when biblical Christians accuse them of not being Christians, the reality is that Mormons started the argument by saying that the Bible is wrong, that biblical Christians are wrong, that biblical Christians are not true Christians, and that only the Mormons are right!

The sad fact is that the Mormons are wrong. It is a sad fact because 14 to 15 million people have been deceived into believing these damnable lies (and I have only touched the tip of the iceberg in the things I have pointed out in this article). Mormons need our pity, our prayers, and, if they will listen, our witness of the true Gospel. But they do not need to be legitimized with the title of Christian by the ignorant media and politicians who are afraid to speak the truth for fear of losing an election. On the other hand, lest I be misunderstood, I thank God that there is no religious test to hold office in the country. We all ought to be very thankful for our religious freedom that allows us to worship according to our individual consciences unhindered and for the blessing that we do not have an established state religion.