

Back To Basics

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

SHINING THE LIGHT ON MORMONISM

Johnie Edwards

This special issue of *Back To Basics* takes a look at the Mormon Church, better known as The Church of Latter-day Saints. They refer to themselves as “Latter-day Saints” because they claim to have received latter-day revelations. As they make house-calls, they are eager to show a film as they try to teach that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are to be used as one book. Their argument will not fly!

1) **THE TEXT.** In their failure to prove the Book of Mormon and the Bible are to be used as one book, they make their appeal to Ezekiel 37:15-22.

2) **TWO STICKS.** The Mormons mis-use the “two sticks” of Ezekiel to make them say something that God never intended to say.

3) **ONE STICK FOR JUDAH.** “Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions” (Ezek. 37:16).

4) **ONE STICK FOR JOSEPH.** “...Then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions” (Ezek. 37:17).

5) **JOIN THE TWO STICKS.** “And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand” (Ezek. 37:17).

6) **THE MEANING OF JOINING THE TWO STICKS.** The Bible is its best interpreter. So instead of letting the Mormons tell us what it means, we make our appeal to the word of God. God said He would “take the stick of Joseph...and the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand” (Ezek. 37:18-19).

7) **TWO NATIONS BECOME ONE.** God is not discussing two books, but rather two nations: Israel and Judah. “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezek. 37:21-22).

8) **ONLY ONE GOSPEL.** The Book of Mormon is not another gospel as the Mormons claim. Paul wrote, “there is not another gospel” (Gal. 1:8-9). Mormon doctrine perverts the gospel of Christ.

WHY ALL THESE TEMPLES?

Mark Mayberry

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints operates approximately 125 temples worldwide. Mormon temples are not sites of regular Sunday worship, but are dedicated to special purposes.

1) **SACRED PLACES.** According to Mormon theology, LDS temples are the most sacred places on earth. Yet, the New Testament affirms that the temple of God is not composed of brick and mortar, but individual Christians who are counted as living stones (1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Pet. 2:4-10).

2) **ETERNAL MARRIAGE.** According to Mormon theology, LDS temples are places where unique rituals are performed, i.e., the sealing of eternal marriages, and baptism for the dead. When marriage is solemnized in a temple, Mormons believe that the resulting union will continue throughout all eternity. However, this doctrine contradicts the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, which affirms that marriage is a temporal and earthly relationship, not an eternal and heavenly one (Eccl. 9:2-10; Mt. 22:23-33; Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40).

3) **BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.** The Mormon Church also practices proxy baptism by the living on behalf of the dead. However, God's word teaches that each person will be judged according

to his own deeds. Individual accountability is repeatedly affirmed in Scripture. Consider the words of Solomon (1 Ki. 8:31-32), the prophets (Is. 3:10-11; Ezek. 18:1-13, 20), Jesus (Mt. 16:27), and Paul (Rom. 2:5-11; 14:10-12).

4) **SPECIAL MEETINGS.** According to Mormon theology, LDS temples are places where special meetings are held: e.g., the Quorum of the 12 Apostles, etc. However, no one today can serve as an apostle because no one today can meet the qualifications (Acts 1:15-26). Furthermore, the New Testament says nothing about the continued function of any so-called Melchizedekian or Aaronic Priesthoods.

5) **SPIRITUAL CLOSENESS.** According to Mormon theology, LDS temples are places of spiritual communion, where believers can feel a special closeness to God. However, the Bible teaches that location is inconsequential; rather, God desires that our worship be in spirit and in truth, i.e., with a proper attitude and according to a Scriptural form (Jn. 4:19-24). Prayer and praise can be offered "in every place" (Mal. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:8).

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IS THE MORMON CHURCH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

John Isaac Edwards

The Mormon Church claims to be the church of Christ. A simple comparison will show too many differences for the Mormon Church to be the church of Christ. Consider a few basic differences (there are many, many more):

1) **DIFFERENT BEGINNINGS.** The church of Christ had its beginning in Jerusalem around AD 33, as predicted in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament (Is. 2:2-3; Lk. 24:47; Acts 2). The Mormon Church began in Fayette, New York in 1830. Thus, the Mormon church is too new to be true.

2) **DIFFERENT BUILDERS.** The church of Christ has a divine builder —Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mt. 16:18). The builder and founder of the Mormon Church is a man named Joseph Smith, Jr. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Ps. 127:1).

3) **DIFFERENT HEADQUARTERS.** The headquarters of the church of Christ are where the Head is. Since Jesus is “head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22) and is “passed into the heavens” (Heb. 4:14), our headquarters are in heaven. Do you know where the headquarters of the Mormon Church are located? Salt Lake City, Utah. Thus, members of the church of Christ have a heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20), while members of the Mormon Church have an earthly citizenship.

4) **DIFFERENT STANDARDS OF AUTHORITY.** The church of Christ respects the Bible, God’s final and complete revelation to man, as its sole standard of authority (Mt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3). The Mormon

Church accepts the Book of Mormon as another testament and receives its authority from alleged “latter-day” revelation.

5) **DIFFERENT DESTINIES.** The church of Christ has a glorious destiny as it will be “delivered up” to “the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24). The fate of Mormonism is to be “rooted up” at Christ’s coming (Mt. 15:13).

These are differences with which Mormons need to come to terms. We plead with you to leave the errors of Mormonism and simply be a member of the church of Christ.

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WHO ARE THE MORMONS?

Joe R. Price

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are commonly known as “Mormons” by those who are not members, and “saints” by those who are. The name “Mormon” is taken from a supposed prophet of the same name who is said to have lived somewhere in the Americas during the 4th century A.D. According to Mormon teaching, this man wrote The Book of Mormon (a record of an ancient civilization upon gold plates that was later translated by Joseph Smith, Jr.).

1) SOME MORMON CLAIMS.

■ *Mormons claim to be the church of Christ.* When the Mormons organized and established their church on April 6, 1830 in Fayette, New York, they called it the “church of Christ” (*Doctrine and Covenants 20:1-2, 61, 70*). There is a fundamental problem with this claim. The church of Christ was established in the first century through the preaching of the gospel of Christ on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Jesus said He would build His church upon the principle that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and He did (Mt. 16:16-18). About 3,000 souls were “added together” that day (Acts 2:37-41). Since that day the Lord has continued to add to His church those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). The church of Christ did not begin in 1830.

■ *Mormons claim the gospel was corrupted and later restored through Joseph Smith, Jr.* They believe the Mormon Church is the restored church of a restored gospel. In fact, they believe the cycle of apostasy and restoration has occurred numerous times since the earth began (*Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, 634-635*). The gospel plan of salvation was not

revealed to Adam, Abraham, or Moses (Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). “The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:18). Mormons believe the gospel was lost due to man’s corruption of it; “plain and precious things,” they say, were taken from the Bible (1 Nephi 13:28). The Bible says the first-century gospel is the “incorruptible” word of God that endures forever (1 Pet. 1:22-25). Men and women have certainly “departed from the faith” through the ages since the first century, but the faith (truth) has not departed from the earth (1 Tim. 4:1, 6). The faith is not subject to corruption; it was “once for all delivered” (Jude 3).

■ *Mormons claim the LDS Church is the only true church.* Jesus Christ built only one church (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). Joseph Smith, Jr. claimed God told him in a vision that all the denominations were wrong and to join none of them. Though an accurate assessment, the supposed vision and the remedy Smith applied was not from God. The remedy was not to build a new church, but to repent of the false doctrines of men and return to the New Testament pattern in all things (Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13). The Mormon Church has a different authority, a different organization and a different worship from the New Testament church. It is not the church of Christ (Mt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:17; Acts 14:23; Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42; 20:7; Eph. 5:19).

■ *Mormons claim to be Latter-day Saints.* Yet, the apostle Peter identified the day of Pentecost as among the “last days,” while the first century writer of the book of Hebrews noted that God speaks to us “in these last days...by His Son” (Acts 2:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2). The Mormons

are neither “Latter-day” nor have they been “sanctified in Christ Jesus” to be called saints in the first place; they are still lost in their sins. They are not members of the church of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 2:47; 18:8; Mt. 16:16-20; Heb. 12:22-23).

2) **THE ORIGIN OF MORMONISM.** The story of the origin of Mormonism is the story of Joseph Smith, Jr. He reported that during his teenage years he received visions of God the Father and Jesus (14 years old), as well as visits from an angel named Moroni who told him about gold plates (containing the “fulness of the everlasting gospel”) and a breastplate with the Urim and Thummim for translating the gold plates. Smith says he was first allowed to see these items at the age of 17, and then given to him for translating in 1827 (at 21 years of age). The Book of Mormon was first published in 1830.

Joseph Smith, Jr. produced the Book of Mormon by “translating” the gold plates from “reformed Egyptian” (a completely unknown language in the annals of history), which were then supposedly taken from the earth. Thus, nobody can examine the gold plates and their translation — we must take the word of Smith, plus the “Three Witnesses,” that they existed.

Smith “told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would be nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*History of the Church, IV:461*). “Indeed, no man can be saved unless he believes the Book of Mormon” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, Bruce R. McConkie, 471*). It is telling that this “most correct of any book on earth,” supposedly revealed and translated “by the power of God” (*History of the Church, I:54-55*), has subsequently undergone over 3,900 doctrinal, grammatical, and punctuation changes. A corrupt message did not produce a restored church.

The gospel of Christ is complete. It was written by inspired men to thoroughly equip “the man of God” for “every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Combining this with the incorruptible nature of the first century word of God, we have every confidence that the New Testament is complete and fully able to save sinners and sustain our faith (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-25). The Book of Mormon is extraneous, unnecessary, and not from God. The New Testament does not need “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” (the Book of Mormon) to change it, correct it, or validate it.

3) **MODERN MORMONISM.** On the basis of his visionary accounts, Smith and five others organized the Mormon Church on April 6, 1830 in Fayette, New York. Today, headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, there are almost 13 million Mormons worldwide.

The Mormon Church seeks acceptance as part of “mainstream Christianity,” while maintaining its distinguishing doctrines. It looks for ecumenical recognition while demanding its members testify to its exclusivity. It is a wealthy church, wielding religious, political, and monetary power worldwide. Notwithstanding, its doctrines are false. Its religious practices do not conform to the “pattern of sound words” announced and written by the first century apostles of Christ (2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Jn. 9). Mormons remain lost in sin. They must hear, believe, and obey the gospel, New Testament of Jesus Christ, in order to be saved (Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 10:1-3).

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THE "PROPHET" JOSEPH SMITH, JR.

Donnie V. Rader

Without Joseph Smith, Jr. there would be no Mormon church. Just who was Joseph Smith? What do we know about him? Smith once said, "No man knows my history." While we may not know all of his history, we do know plenty. We know enough of his claims and doctrine that we can conclude that he was a false prophet.

1) **EARLY HISTORY.** Joseph Smith, Jr. was born in Sharon, Vermont on December 23, 1805 to Joseph and Lucy Smith. In 1817 (when Joseph was 11), the Smith family moved to an area near Palmyra, NY. In time, most of Smith's family had joined the Presbyterian church, but he had not decided which church to join. When he was 14 (Spring of 1820), he claimed to have a vision telling him to join none of the churches for they all were in error. On September 21, 1823 he claimed to have a second vision in which a messenger (Moroni) appeared to him telling him the location of a book that was written on golden plates. The book was an account of the former inhabitants of "this continent" and contained the "fullness of the everlasting gospel." The next day Smith went to a hill (called the hill Cumorah) near where he lived and found the golden plates in a stone box with the Urim and Thumim and the breastplate. He was not allowed to take them, but was told by the angel that he should come back to this place every year for four years. He finally took the plates on September 22, 1827. During the time he was waiting to get the plates, he married Emma Hale of Harmony, PA (January 18, 1827).

2) **His Books.** The plates Smith claimed to receive had to be translated from "reformed

Egyptian." Others joined Smith in his work. Martin Harris, a New York farmer, financed the project. Oliver Cowdery, a former school teacher, helped by writing down what Smith told him to write. These two along with David Whitmer served as the "three witnesses" to the Book (which is mentioned in the opening pages of every Book of Mormon). Finally, on March 26, 1830 the Book of Mormon was published. Doctrine and Covenants (published 1833) deals with the origin and organization of the church. Smith claimed that this was directly from God (1:37-38). Pearl of Great Price (published 1851) was a combination of history and latter-day revelation. It was canonized as Scriptures by the Mormon church in 1880.

3) **IMPORTANCE TO MORMONISM.** Without Joseph Smith, Jr. there would be no Book of Mormon. Without him, there would be no Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Brigham Young, second president of the Mormon Church, said of Smith, "A better man never lived upon the face of this earth" (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, p. 41*).

Other articles in this special will demonstrate that Smith's claim was not true. Here we merely show his history.

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APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

Jarrold Jacobs

The Mormon church is an American invention. There is no record of its existence before the early 1800's when Joseph Smith began teaching on Mormonism, and the supposed words of an angel named "Moroni." The Mormon church, in an attempt to make themselves look legitimate as a religious group, has had, and continues to have today, those whom they call apostles and prophets. Joseph Smith was called the first "prophet" in the Mormon church, and since that time, they have continued to appoint men to serve as both apostles and prophets. However, are the apostles and prophets of the Mormon church what God had in mind when He described apostles and prophets in the Bible? Let us study and see.

1) **GOD'S REVELATION IS COMPLETE.** This is key to understanding the role of apostles and prophets in the Lord's church (Mt. 16:18). The Bible says that the faith has been "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). In other words, there is nothing left to be revealed by God. We have it all. Further, we see that God condemned those who would add to or take from what was revealed in Scripture (Rev. 22:18-19). All of His revelation can be found within the pages of the Bible! It gives us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3); not some or most, but everything. Thus, it makes void the Mormon's religious books (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl Of Great Price), and their claims to have modern-day apostles and prophets walking the earth.

2) **APOSTLES AND PROPHETS SERVED SPECIFIC ROLES IN BIBLE TIMES.** When we define the words "apostle" and "prophet," we see they had specific and simple meanings. The word "apostle" literally means, "One sent" (*Strong, Thayer*). The word

"prophet" means, "mouth" or "mouth-piece." Specifically, when we read about apostles and prophets in the Bible, we see that apostles were "sent" by God, and prophets were the "mouths" of God. They had roles to serve within God's plan of salvation, for the people did not have the completed word written down where they could read and study it for themselves. Since the Bible is in its completed form, what would an "apostle" or "prophet" teach that has not already been taught in the Bible (1 Pet. 4:11; Gal. 1:6-9)?

3) **THE OFFICE OF AN APOSTLE HAS QUALIFICATIONS.** Upon further study, we find that in order for one to be considered an apostle in the Bible, he had to meet two very specific conditions. One, he had to have been alive during the lifetime of John. Two, he had to have been an eyewitness of Christ after His resurrection (Acts 1:22). When we remember that the Mormon church did not even exist before the early 1800's in America, we know there has never been a prophet among the Mormons who was Scripturally qualified to serve in that role! We remember the apostle Paul saying he was qualified, but even he was "as of one born out of due time." Christ was "last of all" seen by him (1 Cor. 15:8). In fact, since the second century, there has been no one qualified to serve in that role as an apostle of Christ. How can the Mormons claim to have God-sanctioned apostles and prophets today? They can't!

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REVELATION FROM GOD: COMPLETE OR CONTINUAL?

Justin Monts

In spite of the Bible's claim that it is sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16), some maintain that it is not enough. Mormons are chief advocates of the insufficiency of Scripture. They argue that modern-day revelation is needed. What exactly are their claims and what is the Bible answer?

1) **MORMONS CLAIM THE BIBLE WAS CORRUPTED.** Joseph Smith said, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct book of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (Introduction to the Book of Mormon). Latter-day Saints believe their book is more correct than the Bible! One of their passages gives the reason: "They (speaking of Catholics – jnm) have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious" (1 Nephi 13:26). Thus, Mormons believe God's word was corrupted, tainted, and tampered with. But what does the Bible say? Peter said the word of God is "incorruptible" and "abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). *Incorruptible* means "not liable to corruption" (*Vine's*, p. 246). Jesus said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35). But the Mormons teach it has been broken. Who shall we believe?

2) **MORMONS CLAIM THE BIBLE IS NOT ENOUGH.** In the Book of Mormon it is recorded: "Thou fool that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible... Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words" (2 Nephi 29:6-10). The Book of Mormon alleges that more revelation is to be expected. But Peter, writing in the first century, assured us that we have been "given all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). Jude exhorted Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered

to the saints" (Jude 3). The phrase once for all means "not requiring repetition" (*Vine's*, p. 819). Jesus was also offered once for all for sin (Heb. 7:27). Does Jesus have to die repeatedly or continually?

3) **MORMONS CLAIM A "BURNING IN YOUR BOSOM" IS GOD'S SIGN THAT THE BOOK OF MORMON IS FROM GOD.** Quoting from their book: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent ... he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4). Mormons ask folks to read the Book of Mormon and then to pray for a sensation or feeling that it is true. Did you ever read of any first century Christian asking others to pray and wait for a burning in the bosom? Does a better-felt-than-told experience establish what is right? If so, God would be the author of confusion for many in religion claim to follow their heart. Rather, the Bible teaches the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9).

4) **GOD'S REVELATION IS COMPLETE.** The Lord charged, "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18). Does that sound like we should look for more revelation? The gospel in the first century was enough to make a man complete (2 Tim. 3:16). Let us be content with the pure Jerusalem gospel and not seek another gospel (Gal. 1:6-10). "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets but he has in these last days spoken to us by his Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2)!

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MORMONISM AND THE BIBLE

Keith Greer

What do Mormons believe about the Bible? “Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe the Bible. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: “If all men believe the Bible, all would be Mormons. Bible doctrine is Mormon doctrine and Mormon doctrine is Bible doctrine. They are one in the same”” (*Tract, “What the Mormons Think of Christ,”* p. 3).

It sounds good, but what the Mormon Church teaches and practices does not sustain such statements. Allow me to share with you what the Book of Mormon REALLY says about the Bible.

1) WHAT THE BOOK OF MORMON SAYS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

■ *The Bible does not contain all the truth; thus, it is an inadequate guide for mankind.* “And because my word shall hiss forth—many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible...Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written” (2 Nephi 29:3, 10). What does the Bible say? “As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). Since God has given us “all things,” we need nothing more. James referred to God’s word as the “perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25). This means it is complete; nothing needs to be added.

■ *The Bible has been corrupted by man.* “Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things

taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God” (1 Nephi 13:28). One of the favorite lines the Mormons use concerning the Bible is: “It is correct as properly translated.” The Bible itself tells a different story. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2) **WHERE THE BOOK OF MORMON AND THE BIBLE DO NOT AGREE.** The Mormon Church believes that the Book of Mormon and the Bible are like a pair of gloves—both inspired by God. This theory could be confirmed if the Book of Mormon and the Bible taught the same thing. Let’s observe some places where they do not agree.

■ *The place of Jesus’ birth.* The Bible teaches, in Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1, that the city is Bethlehem. In Alma 7:10, the Book of Mormon says that Mary shall give birth at Jerusalem.

■ *The darkness that covered the earth when Jesus died.* The Bible teaches that darkness covered the earth for three hours (Mt. 27:45). The Book of Mormon, in Helaman 14:20, 27, says the earth would be darkened for three days at Jesus’ death.

■ *Melchizedek’s priesthood.* The Bible teaches that Melchizedek was a one-time priest who reigned under no one (Heb. 7:3). The Book of Mormon, in Alma 13:18, teaches that he reigned under his father.

■ *God’s nature.* The Bible teaches that God is a Spirit, and not material (Jn. 4:24; Lk. 24:39). According to another one of the Mormon writings,

Doctrines and Covenants, God had a body of flesh and blood (130:22).

■ *Marriage.* According to the Bible, marriage is a lifetime contract between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:4-6; Rom. 7:1-4). Mormonism teaches, and some still practice, plural marriages. Consider Doctrines and Covenants 132:1-4; 19:20; 52:60-62. Joseph Smith himself had 47 wives! Another interesting fact about plural marriages is that in the first edition of Doctrines and Covenants, 1835, a section denounced polygamy. This remained true until 1876, but it's now been inserted in section 132.

■ *Elders and deacons.* According to the Bible qualifications, elders must be married and have children (1 Tim. 3; Ti. 1). Mormons make a distinction between the elder and bishop offices, but the Bible refers to them as the same office. Mormons teach that elders may be young and unmarried.

■ *Praying for truth.* A Mormon elder may come to your door asking you to pray to God for truth, and he will tell you the Book of Mormon is true (Jas. 1:5). God has already answered that prayer, in Galatians 1:6-9, and He tells me the Book of Mormon is false! When we study, we learn that wisdom and knowledge are two different things.

■ *Inability to understand the Bible.* According to New Testament teaching, we can read and understand (Eph. 3:3-5). Later, in Ephesians 5:17, Paul commanded Christians to have an understanding of God's will. According to two Book of Mormon passages, God's will cannot be understood (1 Nephi 28:29; 2 Nephi 29:6). In 1966 one of the so-called Mormon apostles, Lefrand Richards, said, "The everlasting gospel could not be discovered through reading the Bible alone."

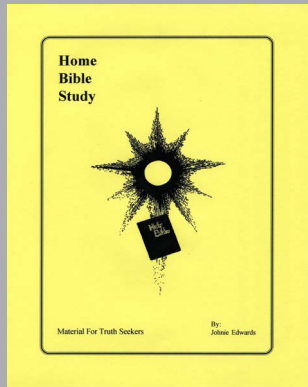
■ *Book of Mormon's superiority to the Bible.* Listen to the words of Brigham Young: "The testimony establishing the Book of Mormon is far

superior to that establishing the Bible in its present form" (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 7, p. 36*). Only Joseph Smith supposedly saw the golden plates containing the words of the Book of Mormon. Many of the so-called witnesses later recanted their testimony of having seen those plates. If the Book of Mormon is a superior book compared to the Bible, and if it is inspired by God, how does one explain the fact that today's edition has undergone more than 3,900 changes from the first edition of 1830?

The Mormons, according to their practices and teachings over the years, have no confidence in the Bible. Whenever there is a conflict between the Book of Mormon and the Bible, they always say it's because the Bible has been incorrectly translated. I prefer to stand by the apostle Paul's words, "Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: That you may be justified in your words, And may overcome when you are judged" (Rom. 3:4).

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THE 'GOD' OF MORMONISM

Randy Blackaby

Christians and Mormons do not worship the same God. Both may speak of deity in similar terminology, but the concept of God is radically different, one derived from Scripture, the other from Mormon theology and extra-biblical writings. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chafes at such affirmations, but all one must do is read their own Encyclopedia of Mormonism to learn about their 'god.'

The 'god' Mormons worship is merely an exalted man, not eternal but having himself a beginning, a flesh-and-bone being who once was a sinner like us but who evolved or progressed to godhood. He is one of many gods, not a singular deity. Mormons also believe and are taught that humans also can evolve into gods. Further, the Mormon 'god' did not create our universe but himself evolved after the world began.

While the concept now has fallen into disrepute among Mormons, Joseph Smith, founder of the religious movement, believed Adam became God. Mormons also believe God has a wife, a mother god.

These conceptions of God are totally foreign to the God revealed in the Bible. Genesis 1:1 declares God created the heavens and the earth. He is described as "eternal" in Deuteronomy 33:27 and Psalm 90:2. He is a "spirit" and does not have flesh and bone (Jn. 4:24; Lk. 24:39). God is not evolving but is described in opposite terms—as immutable (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17).

While three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, compose the Godhead (Mt. 28:19; 1 Jn. 5:7), there is but one God. God declared of Himself, through the ancient prophet, "And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me" (Is. 43:10).

God was never a sinner. The Bible declares, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). The Bible says absolutely nothing about God evolving or progressing to this state of holiness. If He "changes not," such progression is impossible (Mal. 3:6).

The nonsense about God's wife/mother is just that. Sexuality, sexual reproduction, and marriage do not exist in the heavenly realm. Jesus made that clear in Matthew 22:30.

Even though the Mormons acknowledge the existence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they do not see them comprising one God or deity. Rather, they claim these three are three gods.

More bizarre and also totally lacking in any observable or divinely revealed evidence, Mormons teach a plurality of gods have come from a host of planets where they once were mortal men.

Mormons believe that once men reach the celestial level of heaven and become "gods," they and their wives will produce offspring for eternity. These spirit children will, in turn, inhabit physical bodies and have the opportunity to progress to godhood as well. Since they believe God progressed in this same fashion, they believed God the Father married God the Mother and together they have produced spirit children.

If all this seems strange to the Bible student, Mormon teaching about the third person of the Godhead is even stranger. One of Mormonism's apostles has written, "The Holy Spirit is in a class with magnetism or electricity. He is a divine fluid, composed of material atoms or particles, or in other words an impersonal energy or cosmic force through which God acts" (*Parley Pratt, Key to Science of Theology, 1855 edition, p. 29*).

This review of the "god of Mormonism" only summarizes some of the main erroneous concepts they have about God, but it shows that Mormons are guilty of changing "the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man" and have "exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:23, 25).

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THE 'CHRIST' OF MORMONISM

Jerry Fite

Jesus Christ may be in the name of the Mormon Church, and Mormons may consider themselves “Christians.” You may have had no reason to think that the Christ in the Mormon belief system is any different from the Jesus revealed to us in the Bible. But, as we shall see, there are substantial differences.

1) THE JESUS CHRIST OF MORMONISM IS A CREATED BEING. Mormons believe Jesus was procreated as a spirit child between a heavenly father and heavenly mother. Jesus was the firstborn of this spirit family which included Lucifer as a brother along with all of us before we inhabited the earth (*Smith, Gospel Doctrine, p. 70*). The Bible clearly identifies Jesus as the self-existent “I Am” and ever present before time (Jn. 8:24, 58; 1:3). When Mormons call Jesus their “elder brother,” they mean it literally through procreation, not as the spiritual relationship gained through the Gospel.

2) THE JESUS CHRIST OF MORMONISM WAS NOT BEGOTTEN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Brigham Young, in 1852, taught that Jesus was begotten by the Father. “He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost” (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 1, p. 50-51*). False concepts of the Father engaged in sexual intimacy with Mary has led Mormons to contradict clear teaching regarding the virgin birth of Jesus. God’s angel said clearly, “that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 1:20, Lk. 1:35).

3) THE JESUS CHRIST OF MORMONISM WAS A POLYGAMIST WITH CHILDREN. Orson Hyde has taught Mormons that the marriage in Cana was Jesus’ own wedding. He was not only married but married to multiple women, including Mary and

Martha. Mr. Hyde adds to his history of Christ by saying Jesus had the opportunity to look upon his own ‘natural children’ before His death (*Orson Hyde, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, p. 82, 210*). Only in Mormonism would Jesus need to be married to uphold their doctrine of celestial marriage. For the Bible never indicates that Jesus was married, much less a polygamist. Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus was invited to the marriage in Cana. He was a guest, not the bridegroom (Jn. 2:2).

4) THE JESUS CHRIST OF MORMONISM APPEARED IN AMERICA AFTER HIS ASCENSION TO HEAVEN. About a year following Jesus’ ascension to Heaven, the Book of Mormon claims Jesus descended from Heaven and appeared on our continent, and chose twelve new disciples to teach and baptize (3 Nephi 11, 15-16, 19). According to the Bible, Jesus spent forty days after His resurrection preparing His twelve apostles, and then ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God. He continues to sit, not to descend to appoint a new set of twelve disciples on distant continents, but will sit until He descends to put death under His feet by raising all from the dead (Acts 1:3; Heb. 1:3; Acts 2:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:23-26, Jn. 5:28-29).

5) THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST OF MORMONISM IS LIMITED IN ITS ATONEMENT. Certain sins, such as adultery, put people beyond the atoning blood of Christ. According to Mormon teaching, one must give one’s life to atone for such sins (*Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, pp. 133-135*). The truth is, Jesus offered one sacrifice to atone for sins for all time (Heb. 10:11-12, 1 Jn. 1:7).

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MORMON DOCTRINES ABOUT MAN

Tom Roberts

**“What is man, that thou art mindful of him”
(Heb. 2:6; Ps. 8:4-6).**

This insightful question about mankind and his nature is amply answered in the Bible. He is one created in the image of God (Gen. 1:17), mortal, destined to die for his sins (Heb. 9:27; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Ezek. 18:4, 20). Yet, he was loved by God and Jesus Christ so that he may be redeemed (Jn. 1:12; 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:2; Acts 2:38). Man will be judged by God’s word (Jn. 12:48) and spend an eternity in heaven or hell (Mt. 25:31-46). Sin is a major factor in the life of man. He does not inherit sin, but sin is a “transgression of law” (1 Jn. 3:4). Sin separates us from God (Is. 59:1-2) and is a tragedy in every sense.

However, Mormon doctrine teaches that sin is a blessing! Paul asked, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” His immediate response, “God forbid!” (Rom. 6:1-2). Again, he was accused of saying, “Let us do evil that good may come.” He affirmed that such an accusation was slander (Rom. 3:8). But Mormons believe and teach that it was necessary for man to sin so that he could recover from it and become a god, himself. You may find this error in *Gospel Principles*, p. 33; Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 2:25; Mosiah 3:11-16; *Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1*, pp. 114-115, namely, sin is “a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us.” Again, On June 8, 1873, speaking from the Salt Lake City Tabernacle, Brigham Young said, “The Devil told the truth ... I do not blame Mother Eve. I would not have had her miss eating the forbidden fruit for anything....” Another Mormon president declared, “The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise... We can hardly look upon anything resulting in such benefits [i.e., godhood] as a sin.” Incredibly, Mormons believe that Satan did us a favor! Shall we do evil that good may come?

Mormons believe that it was necessary for man to sin in order for him to become a god (As god once was, man is. As God is, man may become). But it is

evident that man in his present state is not deity, so how does this transpire? Mormons believe that life is a probationary time for them by which they obey the laws and ordinances of Mormonism and became a god, just like Jehovah did. Read it clearly: “If there were a point where a man in his progression could not proceed any further, the very idea would throw a gloom over every intelligent and reflecting mind. God himself is increasing in knowledge, power and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end. It is just so with us. We are in a probation, which is a school of experience” (*Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses, vol. 6, p. 120, 1857*). Again, the Book of Mormon teaches, “And we see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death [...] which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead” (Alma 12:24, p. 239).

“That endless state” which lies at the end of probation is that state of exaltation in which Mormons teach that each faithful one will become an actual god in his own right, be given a planet like earth to govern and have children who will start the process all over again, ad infinitum. “After you become a good Mormon, you have the potential of becoming a god” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 345-347, 354*) “Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them,” (DC 132:20).

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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Which One?

Circle the book, the person, and the church that is right.

Verse to Remember: "There is one body, one Lord, one faith" (Eph. 4:4-6).

Which Book?

The Bible

It is God's word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is complete (2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). We are not to add to it or take away from it (Rev. 22:18-19).

The Book of Mormon

It was written by man. It is not complete. It adds to and takes away from God's word, the Bible.

Which Person?

Jesus Christ

He is God's Son (Jn. 3:16). He is the Head of the church (Eph. 1:21-23). He has all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18).

Joseph Smith

He was just a man. He is the founder of the Mormon church. He has no authority.

Which Church?

The Church of Christ

It was established in AD 33 in Jerusalem (Is. 2:2-3; Acts 2:5, 47). We can read about it in the Bible (Rom. 16:16).

The Mormon Church

It was established in 1830 in Fayette, New York. It is nowhere found in the Bible.

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

TEACHING THE GOSPEL TO MORMONS

Craig Thomas

In some respects, teaching the gospel to a Mormon is no different than teaching it to any person. Like everyone, a Mormon must be convinced by the Bible (Rom. 10:17) of their sinful, lost condition (Rom. 3:23) and its eternal consequences (Rom. 6:23). Then, they must be convinced the Bible provides the only cure for their terrible condition via God's grace as manifested in Jesus' sacrifice (Rom. 3:24-25). If this message reaches the right heart (Lk. 8:15), they will readily recognize they must repent (Acts 2:38), confess their Lord (Rom. 10:10), be baptized (Mk. 16:16), and give all diligence to grow (2 Pet. 1:5-11). However, as we seek to teach Mormons we must realize there are hurdles we will have to help them clear as we aid them in submitting to God's plan. I believe there are three key hurdles we must be prepared to address.

1) **CAPTIVE OF A FALSE RELIGION.** The most difficult hurdle for a Mormon to overcome is the fact they've been deceived into believing and practicing a false religion. Thus, it's crucial to diligently prepare yourself to refute the errors of Mormonism. The errors of Mormonism are legion. Thus, I would recommend keeping the discussion narrowed to a few crystal clear departures from the Bible. For example, The Book of Mormon (Mosiah 18:8-30) teaches that the "church of Christ" was established in America "about B.C. 147" (Book of Mormon footnote) with Alma as its high priest and founder (Mosiah 23:16). I would recommend using Matthew 16:18 as a starting point in teaching Bible truth about the establishment of Christ's church.

2) **CAPTIVE TO A FALSE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY.** Mormons claim to believe the Bible,

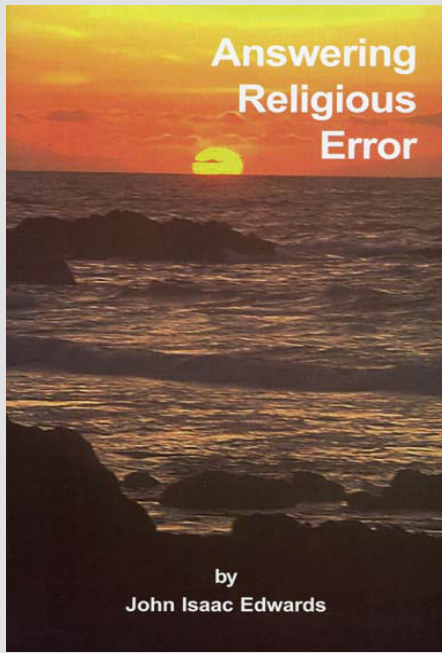
but argue it's been corrupted over the centuries. So, they believe the writings of Joseph Smith are a more accurate "latter-day" revelation of God's will. Unlike the Bible (1 Jn. 4:1, 6) they will appeal for others to trust the veracity of the Book of Mormon based on emotions rather than evidence. Thus, it's important to challenge them to defend their book against its obvious contradictions with the Bible (1 Pet. 3:15). It's also important to point out the Book of Mormon admits errors (3 Nephi 23:6-13; Mormon 8:12,17; 9:30-34), whereas the Bible claims to be the perfect, complete, Holy Spirit-guided revelation of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 3:1-5; 1 Cor. 2:10-13). Mormons will often cite Bible passages in efforts to validate the Book of Mormon and Mormonism. But, when pressed on obvious contradictions they will claim the errors are the fault of the Bible text. Stand fast! Press the point of their intellectual dishonesty in trying to correct errors in a book "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) and written in words "the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:13) with a book that admits its own faults and mistakes!

3) **CAPTIVE TO STRONG SOCIAL TIES.** Finally, be prepared for the strong ties of family and friends that will steadily and powerfully seek to shame and sway the Mormon prospect into remaining enslaved to Mormonism. A Mormon who becomes a Christian must be prepared to become a total and complete pariah to his/her Mormon family and Mormon friends (Mt. 10:34-39). Turning one's back on loved ones is difficult, but worth the cost (Mt. 16:26).

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