

So What's the Difference?

Comparing Evangelical Christianity to Other Faiths



#12 – Mormons

A. Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS)

- According to the LDS, in 1820, 15-year-old Joseph Smith received a revelation from God that EVERY Christian church since the original Apostles died is apostate, and that Joseph will restore the one true church
- The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, an ancient history of indigenous people inhabiting America between 2200 BC and 431 AD, said to be as equally authoritative as the Bible
- LDS Church is founded by Joseph Smith in 1830. His unorthodox teachings led to persecution and splinter groups.
- After Smith's death in 1844, Brigham Young led them to Utah
- There are approx. 15 million Mormons worldwide today

Concerns about Joseph Smith and LDS

- Concerns about their claims of 1800 years of church apostasy, corrupted Scriptures, and that the Mormon church is "*the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth*" (LDS Doctrine and Covenants 1:30)
- Concerns about the authority of the Book of Mormon

- Salvation does not come by faith. It comes as each person does their part to become worthy of exaltation. They must complete the process Jesus started by being baptized, doing good works, and obeying the LDS church.
- **Truth: We are born sinners, but we are saved by grace alone, justified through faith in Jesus Christ alone, work that Christ completed on the cross. Works play no part in our salvation.**
- **Ps 51:5** ⁴⁵ For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me."
- **Rom 5:17-18** ¹⁷ For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone."
- **Eph 2:8-10** ⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

The Future

- Mormon Teaching
 - There are three levels of heaven
 - First, the Celestial Kingdom. Only obedient Mormons will arrive here in their quest for exaltation to godhood.
 - Second, the Terrestrial Kingdom is for non-Mormons who live moral lives, & Mormons who didn't meet expectations
 - Third, the Telestial Kingdom, where the majority of sinful people go after suffering awhile in hell. Spirits in prison here will be given a second chance to be welcomed into paradise, but only if they accept Mormon teaching, and only if a still living Mormon is baptized on their behalf.
- **Truth: There are only two places of eternity beyond death. Believers in Jesus will go to heaven, non-believers to hell.**
- **Mat 13:49-50** ⁴⁹ That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, ⁵⁰ throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

- Concerns about the changing doctrine that isn't even supported by their own Book of Mormon.
- Concerns about the character of Joseph Smith – his deception, his practice of polygamy and his claim to be a prophet.
- **Truth: The Bible alone is authoritative and sufficient to teach us the truth. Overwhelming manuscript and archaeological evidence prove the accuracy of the Bible. True prophets and churches of Jesus Christ teach the Word of God in the Bible**
- **2 Tim 3:15-16** ¹⁵ You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”

B. So What's the Difference?

God the Father

- Mormon Teaching
 - There are many gods who form the universe
 - These gods used to be men who grew up to be gods
 - They worship Elohim, the God of our planet, who is an exalted man with a body of flesh, who was created by His spirit father and mother.
 - Every Mormon on earth can become a god. There are four stages of existence – pre-mortal life, mortal life, spirit life, and resurrected life. Their quest to become gods starts in their pre-mortal life as spirit children of Elohim. If they pass their probationary period, then they are born on earth as a human baby. Their time on earth is a testing ground to prove their worthiness to progress toward godhood. Mormons pass this test by repentance, LDS baptism, membership in the church, temple rituals, and good works. After physical death, Mormons re-enter the Spirit world continuing their efforts toward godhood.
- **Truth: There is only one true God. He is Spirit, not an exalted man. He is eternal, not created. People worship the one true God, but don't become God...there is only one God.**
- **Num 23:19a** ¹⁹ God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind.”
- **Mal 3:6** ⁶ I am the Lord, and I do not change.”

- **Is 43:10 NIV** ¹⁰ “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

- Mormon Teaching
 - Jesus is the first-born spirit child from the sexual union of Heavenly Father (who has a body of flesh) and Mary.
 - Jesus progressed by obedience & devotion in the spirit world until he became a god.
 - Jesus is the first of the billions of spirit beings sired by Heavenly Father. Lucifer was the second. They are spirit brothers. We also are their spirit brothers and sisters.
 - The Holy Spirit works in perfect unity with Heavenly Father and Jesus to bring about their plans on earth. Heavenly Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are three separate gods.
- **Truth: Jesus is the one and only eternal Son of God.**
- **Mat 1:18-20** ¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. ²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.”
- **Col 1:15-16** ¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶ for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.”

How People Are Saved

- Mormon Teaching
 - Children are innocent and sin-less up to the age of eight.
 - Sin is a positive thing because it tests them and by their good choices, they progress toward godhood.
 - Salvation is possible because Jesus overcame physical death for the human race. They will all be resurrected as spirit-creatures to continue their progression to god-hood.