

Mormonism Research Ministry's Quick Comparison of Fundamental Doctrines

Christianity

Mormonism

SCRIPTURE

The sixty-six books of both the Old and New Testaments comprise the inspired Word of God and are without error in the original writings. The Bible is God's complete written revelation for the salvation of man and is the final authority regarding Christian life and faith (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Mormonism recognizes four written works as scripture: Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. Additionally, the inspired words of its living prophet, official church writings, and General Conference addresses are sometimes considered scripture. Of these sources, only the Bible is questioned regarding its reliability.

TRINITY

There is one uncreated eternal God (John 5:26), eternally existing in three persons: The Father (Ephesians 4:6), Son (John 1:1-4, 14), and Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).

Mormonism denies the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and instead promotes a "Godhead" comprised of three Gods: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Though the Godhead is three different Gods, they are understood to be one in purpose and united in their divine work.

FATHER

God is spirit (John 4:24). He has always been God (Psalm 90:2). He is omniscient and never changes (Malachi 3:6). He is the only true God (Isaiah 44:8).

According to Mormonism, God the Father is a Being of flesh and bone; He is not unique, but is one of many Gods; He was once a man who became a God by following the Mormon system.

SON

Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). He was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23). He led a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15). He atoned for sin by His death on the cross (Romans 5:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24) and rose again bodily on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Because He ever lives, He alone is our High Priest and advocate (Hebrews 7:28). Jesus is equal in authority with the Father because He is the true God (Philippians 2:6).

In Mormonism, Jesus is the literal firstborn son of God in the flesh. Like the Mormon God, he too attained his godhood via obedience. He has the ability to forgive sins, but only after a person has properly repented (i.e., confessed and forsaken all sin, see Doctrine and Covenants 58:43) and kept all of the commandments.

HOLY SPIRIT/HOLY GHOST

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God (Acts 5:3-4). In His ministry He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8), He regenerates spiritually dead people (Titus 3:5), He indwells believers (1 Corinthians 3:16), He guides (Galatians 5:16-18) and instructs (1 Corinthians 2:10-12), and empowers the believer (John 16:7) for Godly living and service.

Mormonism's Holy Ghost (also called the Holy Spirit), as the third member of the Godhead, is the only member who does not have a body of flesh and bone; he is a personage of spirit. He fills several roles including that of witness, comforter, and protector (both spiritually and physically). Once a person is baptized in the LDS Church and confirmed a member, he or she has the right to the constant companionship and assistance of the Holy Ghost as long as he or she keeps the commandments.

THE GOSPEL

The Good News that Jesus made atonement for our sin and by His death on the cross has reconciled us to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 1:20). Lost in sin (Romans 3:23) and enemies to God (Romans 5:10), we are unable to save ourselves (Romans 8:8). But God, in His mercy, saves us through Jesus Christ (Titus 3:4-7). The Gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16).

The Gospel according to Mormonism is comprised of all the doctrines, principles, laws, ordinances, and covenants necessary for a Mormon to achieve eternal life in the presence of God.

“Ordinances are basic to the gospel. Now, what is the gospel of which we speak? It is the power of God unto salvation; it is the code of laws and commandments which help us to become perfect, and the ordinances which constitute the entrance requirements.” (12th President Spencer W. Kimball, The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 502)

SALVATION

Mankind is saved by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ (John 6:47; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). Believers are justified by His shed blood and shall be saved from wrath through Him, not by their own best effort or works, but by the works and mercy of Jesus (John 3:36; 1 John 1:9).

Mormonism recognizes two types of salvation: 1) resurrection; and 2) eternal life in the presence of God the Father. The first is *unconditional* and given to all people. The second is *conditional*, an eternal state merited by an individual's works while on earth.

THE HEREAFTER

Jesus Christ will return again for His own (1 Thessalonians 4:16). All those forgiven by Christ will reign with Him throughout eternity (2 Timothy 2:12). He will be our God and we will be His people (2 Corinthians 6:16). Conversely, those who die without Christ's forgiveness face eternal punishment (John 3:18).

Mormonism presents three heavenly kingdoms: 1) the celestial kingdom (for faithful Mormons); 2) the terrestrial kingdom (for lukewarm Mormons and for good people who rejected Mormonism while they were alive); and 3) the celestial kingdom (for the wicked of this world). Additionally, an eternal place called “Outer Darkness is reserved for the devil and his angels (as well as “sons of perdition,” Mormons who turned against the LDS Church while knowing the church is true). In the celestial kingdom there are several levels, the highest of which is for Mormons who have fulfilled all of their spiritual, moral, and ritual obligations and have attained the status of Gods, beings of the same essential nature as God the Father, ruling over their own worlds for all eternity.

MANKIND

Man is a *created*, finite being; created in the image of God, with the ability to reason, make choices, and have relationships (Genesis 1:26-27). All mankind is sinful by nature, and has earned the penalty of death and eternal separation from God (Romans 3:23). Since man's works are contaminated by sin, personal performance cannot overcome this deficit (Proverbs 20:9).

According to Mormonism, before being born as mortals on earth, human beings were first born as spirit children to Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother in their heavenly kingdom. As the literal offspring of deity, human beings are understood to be “gods in embryo.”

THE CHURCH

Christ's church is not an organization, but rather the body of believers who have recognized their lost state and placed their trust in the redeeming work of Christ for their salvation (Ephesians 2:19-22). This true church was established by Jesus Christ, who declared that it will never be overcome (Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20).

According to Mormonism, after the deaths of the biblical apostles the church Christ established fell into apostasy. No true church existed until Joseph Smith restored it in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the LDS Church claims to be “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:30), and its members the only people authorized to preach the gospel or perform baptisms and other ordinances.