

Mormonism – Is It Christian?

Editor's Note

I would like to introduce Daniel (Chip) Thompson to the Moriel readers. Daniel is a longtime friend of mind and a co-laborer with me in the field of Mormonism. His book "The Mormon Scrapbook" is THE only book I recommend to people to learn how to evangelize Mormons. Chip is a pastor, church planter and now head of Tri-Grace Ministries (TGM) in Ephraim, Utah. Chip and his lovely wife Jamie Thompson, are the founders and Executive Directors of TGM, have been missionaries to the people of Utah since 1992. After planting and pastoring Ephraim Church of the Bible for 13 years, God moved in their hearts to start TGM and expand their evangelistic efforts in Utah. Today in the rural county of Sanpete, with a predominant LDS population and against all odds, there exists a thriving Christian presence that continues to bring Mormon people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ephraim Church of the Bible. Tri-Grace Ministries and Solid Rock Christian Club (our Christian club at Snow College) stand as monuments to the grace of God.

Please pray for this wonderful ministry to the Mormons. In Peace, David Lister

MORMONISM - IS IT CHRISTIAN?

Mormonism's official title is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but is it really the Church of Jesus Christ? Many Christians in America and around the world think that the LDS Church is just another Christian denomination but nothing could be further from the truth. Every Christian denomination should share at least one thing in common - JESUS. To say you are disciple of Jesus Christ should require that your doctrinal beliefs line up with the teachings of the Bible.

To answer the question, "Is Mormonism Christian?" we must go back to the early roots of Mormonism. According to Mormonism, in 1820 a boy named Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray and as he prayed two glorious personages appeared to him, one being God the Father and the other being Jesus Christ. Joseph supposedly asked these bright and shining beings a question to which he received an answer that has forever shaped the religion of Mormonism. Consider the following historical narrative and its implications for the LDS Church today.

Joseph Smith said, "I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other - This is My Beloved Son, Hear Him! My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong) - and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight: that those professors were all corrupt: that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. they teach for doctrines the commandments of men. having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." LDS scriptures - "Pearl of Great Price. Joseph Smith History 1:16-19"

In accordance with this event, Joseph Smith created a religion that is the polar opposite of all other Christian denominations. The entire world view of the Mormons is unique and every doctrine within Mormonism opposes the doctrines believed by the Christian denominations. So why is there such confusion about the Christian nature of Mormonism? The confusion enters as

we come to realize that Mormonism adopted all of the biblical terminology of Christianity but with completely different definitions. For instance, both Christians and Mormons believe in the "Fall of Adam and Eve". All Christian denominations believe the fall was a sinful act of rebellion that plunged the entire human race into sin. Mormonism, however, believes that the fall was good and in complete harmony with God's intention for mankind. Consider the following LDS quote, "Some people believe Adam and Eve committed a serious sin when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, latter-day scriptures help us understand that their fall was a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us." (Gospel Principles, LDS Church, pg. 33)

Another fundamental difference between Mormons and Christians are our views in regard to the nature of God. Christianity is monotheistic the belief that there is only one true God. Mormonism on the other hand is polytheistic - the belief that there are many beings that have become Gods. Within Mormonism even God the Father has not eternally been God and if we follow the path which He followed, we can become Gods just like Him.

Joseph Smith said, "I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you can see... God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, p.345-6) And, a few years later another LDS prophet named Lorenzo Snow declared. "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be." (Articles of Faith, James Talmage, pg. 430) According to LDS doctrine, "MEN ARE GODS IN EMBRYO" and as such, man "is capable, by experience through ages of aeons, of evolving into a God." (Achieving a Celestial Marriage, LDS church. 1976. pg. 130)

These few LDS doctrines should suffice to prove the non-Christian nature of Mormonism. All of the Christian denominations would not only consider the above doctrines to be a little off base, they would be condemned as outright blasphemies.

So, how should we view the Mormons? Due to the above named heretical LDS doctrines should we shun and ignore the Mormon people? Unfortunately this has been the norm for the past 150 years. I am going to suggest that Mormon people are not "wolves in sheep's clothing." The Wolf is Satan - Mormon people are just lost sheep that have been led astray by the Deceiver. My family and I have been missionaries to the Mormon people of Utah for 20 years and we love Mormon people. By far our greatest joy in life is leading these dear people out of the bondage and deception of Satan and into the glorious light of Jesus. Yes, Mormons can be saved and been commissioned by our Lord to preach the gospel to everyone. So, "HOW?" How do you lead Mormons to Christ?

The one thing that Christians do have in common with most Mormons is a genuine love for Jesus. Most Mormons really want to please Jesus and they honestly that the doctrines of the LDS church are the doctrines of Jesus Christ. After 20 years of witnessing to Mormons, we can tell you that nothing bothers Mormons more than finding out that Jesus did not teach what their church tells them Jesus taught. If you can in a loving and kind way show them the true teachings of Jesus, Jesus will lead them into a relationship with Himself. We call this seed planting. We plant the seeds of truth and then God causes those seeds to draw them to the truth. Following are what we call the 4 pillars of Mormonism and how you can use the words of Jesus to challenge the thinking of LDS people.

LDS Pillar #1 is a doctrine known to Mormons as CELESTIAL MARRIAGE. Celestial marriages are performed by Mormon leaders in LDS Temples. It is believed by Mormons that these temple ordinances seal a husband and wife together for all eternity. Consider the following quote: "The prophets have uniformly taught that God's great plan for the blessings of his children is eternal marriage... Mormon President Howard W. Hunter described celestial marriage as 'the crowning gospel ordinance'" (Ensign, May 2003, Eternal Marriage Elder F. Burton Howard of the Seventy)

So here is the question, "Have the prophets uniformly taught that celestial marriage is the crowning ordinance of Jesus Christ's gospel?" The answer is NO. No prophet the Bible (or in the Book of Mormon) ever taught this doctrine. And more importantly neither Jesus nor any of His Apostles ever taught this doctrine. The LDS principle of "Eternal Marriage" is not a doctrine taught by Jesus. Only once did Jesus discuss the topic of marriage in the afterlife. This narrative is found in Matthew 22:23-30. Consider the story and the question posed to Jesus, "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her."

STOP HERE - If eternal marriage was a principle of Jesus Christ's gospel, what important question should Jesus have asked these men? JESUS SHOULD HAVE ASKED, "Was the woman married to any of her husbands in the temple for time and all eternity?" But, Jesus did not ask that question because no one was ever married in a Jewish temple. Instead, Jesus answered them, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

Pillar #2 is THE PREEXISTENCE - LDS.org, Pre-earth Life. "Before we were born on the earth, we lived in the presence of our Heavenly Father as His spirit children." This LDS doctrine is the primary support for the Mormon world view that men can become Gods. JESUS TAUGHT THE OPPOSITE: "Father... You loved Me before the foundation of the world... The world has not known You." (John 17:24-25); "The Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." (John 5:37-38); "Not that any man has seen the Father, except He who is from God: He has seen the Father. (John 6:46); "He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him." (John 7:28-29); "It is My Father who honors Me of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him." (John 8:54-59): And, Jesus said, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." (John 8:23-24).

THINK ABOUT IT... If we are all the literal children of God then why would we need to "become the sons of God"? (see John 1:12). And, why would God need to adopt us? (see Rom. 8:14-16).

Pillar #3 - THE GREAT APOSTASY - LDS.org, Apostasy, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has proclaimed to the world... that there was an apostasy of the church founded by Jesus... This is a fundamental belief of the Latter-day Saints. If there had not been an apostasy, there would have been no need for a restoration."

JESUS SAID: "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18); "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35); "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. 28:20).

THINK ABOUT IT... The Kingdom parables taught by Jesus leave no room for a total apostasy - see Matthew 13:24-30 (parable of the tares), Matt. 13:31-32 (parable of the mustard seed), and Matt. 13:33 (parable of the leaven). If the great apostasy happened, Jesus is a liar.

Pillar #4 is PRIESTHOOD AUTHORITY - LDS.org, Priesthood, "The priesthood is the eternal power and authority of God... God gives priesthood authority to worthy male members of the Church so they can act in His name for the salvation of His children." Jesus must not have considered the topic of priesthood authority to be important at all because he never once discussed it with his disciples. Jesus consistently taught that all power and authority would come through the gift of the Holy Ghost/Spirit.

JESUS SAID: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8). And in Acts chapter 2 this is exactly what happened - it had nothing to do with any priesthood (check it out for yourself).

THINK ABOUT IT... According to the book of Hebrews, Jesus is the only high priest after the order of Melchizedek and the Aaronic priesthood is totally obsolete (study this out in Hebrews chapters 5-7).

DO NOT GET THE WRONG IDEA - We are not trying to destroy any LDS person's faith in Jesus. We want Mormons to have a faith that rest in Jesus alone and we want them to trust His teachings as their final authority (Matt. 7:24-29). We have found that these topics challenge Mormons to the max and are used by God's Holy Spirit to draw these wonderful people to Himself.

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