

The Mormon Religion

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Introduction: Is the Church of Mormons the Church of Jesus Christ?

- A. The claim is made by Mormons that their church is *the* church of Jesus Christ.
- B. Mormons challenge us to put them to the test to see if their claim is true.
 - 1. We are asked to examine the Book of Mormon to see if it is from God (cf. Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon by “Apostle” Orson Pratt 1850)
- C. Debate is good! Debate is an approved activity commanded by God (**Jude 3**)
 - 1. For those who seek only the truth of God, debate is an important part of the struggle in determining right from wrong, truth from error.

I. The Beginning of the Mormon Church.

- A. Joseph Smith was the man who *claimed* to receive the latter day revelation known as The Book of Mormon.

Note: “The history of Joseph Smith” can be found in the book The Pearl of Great Price

- 1. Smith, while living in Palmyra, NY claimed he was visited by God and His Son Jesus in 1820 and a few years later by the angel Moroni in 1823.
 - 2. In 1827, this angel gave Smith instructions where to find golden plates, which revealed a new or “latter day” revelation.
 - 3. Received in the language of “reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics” (an unknown language that never existed), Smith then translated the plates.
 - 4. Smith published The Book of Mormon in 1830 and organized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 6, 1830.
 - 5. Smith claimed to receive many additional revelations of God including The Pearl of Great Price and The Book of Doctrine and Covenants (D&C).
- B. The Book of Mormon
 - 1. The Book of Mormon is believed to contain the history of the early settlers of America who migrated from the year 600 B.C. to 421 A.D.
 - a. This colonization is viewed as a time of preparation for the *restoration of the gospel*, America seen as “the promised land.” (**Ether 1: 33-43; 2-3; 6:1-18; Ether 2:12; 1 Nephi 13:12; 2 Nephi 1:6**)
 - 2. This book is believed to be “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” that restores the “plain and precious parts” of the Bible that were removed by the “great and abominable church” (Catholic Church); **1 Nephi 13:26-28**
 - C. The Keys of Priesthood and Apostleship (**D&C 13; 27:12**)
 - 1. Smith claimed the spirit of John the Baptist visited him and his scribe.
 - 2. John bestowed on them the *Aaronic Priesthood* giving them the keys of priesthood, they were baptized, and received the spirit of prophecy.
 - 3. Later, the apostles Peter, James, and John appeared and conferred the *Melchizedek Priesthood*, restoring the authority of the apostles to them.
 - 4. Smith appointed apostles and organized and restored the church.
 - 5. “Apostles” today of the Mormon Church trace their authority to Christ by the ordinations that took place over the years beginning with Smith.
 - D. Today, there are many different Mormon sects (89).

Three main groups: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Utah), Reformed LDS (The Community of Christ) (MO), and the “Church of Christ - Temple Lot.” (MO).

II. Major Beliefs Held by Mormons

- A. God has a physical or material body (**D&C, Sec. 130:22**)
- B. Faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism (immersion) for forgiveness of sins (**Articles of Faith, No. 3 & 4, by Joseph Smith**).
- C. The belief we have miraculous spiritual gifts today (**Articles of Faith No. 7**).
- D. Premillennialism (i.e., the belief we live in a time before the future 1,000 year reign of Christ upon the earth) (**Articles of Faith No. 10**)
- E. “Marriage for Eternity” (requiring a plurality of wives?) (**D&C 132**)
 - 1. D&C 132 teaches that one may have one wife for the here and now and another wife to be with and have children in one’s own eternal kingdom.
 - 2. Eventually, new revelation was given declaring polygamy forbidden.
 - 3. However, some still practice it secretly today (Fundamentalist LDS).
- F. Partake of the Sacrament (Lord’s Supper) every Sunday, using bread and *water*.
 - 1. Smith and early Mormons used fermented wine in the sacrament.
 - 2. In 1833, Smith claimed new revelation, the “Word of Wisdom” (D&C) that declared that drinking of alcohol should be avoided for health sake.
 - 3. This and **D&C 27:2** “*It mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament*” led Mormons to use water instead.
 - 4. Reformed LDS and other sects use unfermented (non-alcoholic) wine.
- G. Eternal progression: To obtain the co-equal position of godhood in Eternity. (LDS Apostle James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, Ch.24, p430 – 431; cf. **D&C 132:20**)

III. The Number One Obstacle of Fellowship: Agreeing on the Standard of Truth.

- A. Jesus said that unity is based on the truth (**John 17:17-23**).
 - 1. If we cannot agree what truth is, then fellowship is impossible.
- B. View of the Bible
 - 1. Christians believe the Bible to be the perfect and inspired word of God (**2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Thes. 2:13**).
 - 2. Mormons believe the Bible to contain errors that need translation by the Book of Mormon and other latter-day revelations (**Articles of Faith No. 8**).
- C. Beliefs of latter-day revelation
 - 1. Christians believe the Bible to be complete, that when the revelation of Christ was complete (**1 Cor. 13:8-10**), miraculous spiritual gifts ceased.
 - 2. Christians believe there is not a succession of apostles, that the original apostles’ teaching is the foundation of the church (**Eph 2:20; cf. Ac 2:42**).
 - 3. In contrast, Mormons do believe in latter-day revelations calling the Book of Mormon “*Another Testament of Jesus Christ.*”
 - 4. Mormons believe that apostles are still living today, inspired by God.
 - 5. As long as there are differences in whether or not there are new revelations today, unity or fellowship will be *impossible*.
- D. We must abide in the doctrine of *Christ* to have fellowship with God (**2 Jn 9**).
 - 1. No compromise can be made if we expect to have fellowship with God.
 - 2. This is what we want for our Mormon neighbors and friends, to abide *only* in the doctrine of Christ as revealed in the New Testament.

Conclusion: The Mormon Religion has yet to be proven to be the Religion of Jesus Christ. When We Take the Bible Alone, Only Then Can We Be Christians Only.