

# Why the Mormon Church is not Christian

---

## Who are Mormons?

The official name of the Mormon Church (LDS Church) today is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith founded it at the age of 24, in the state of New York on April 6, 1830. Joseph Smith proclaimed that God Himself had designated the LDS Church as "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth".<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the LDS Church does not claim to be another Christian denomination. It has claimed, through its leaders and scriptures, to be the one true Church on the face of the whole earth.

When LDS Church teaching is compared to that of Biblical Christianity they contradict each other in the following key areas.

### 1. A Different Gospel

The Bible teaches that the gospel is the message of the death of Jesus and bodily resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. This forgiveness is a gracious free gift of God received by faith and not by works or human effort. (See John 5:24; Acts 15:5-11; Rom 1:16-17; Col 1:21-23).

In contrast to this, The LDS Church teaches that the gospel is "God's plan of salvation, made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Gospel includes the eternal truth or laws, covenants, and ordinances needed for mankind to return to the presence of God."<sup>2</sup>

The LDS Church teaches that in order to receive salvation and exaltation through Jesus' Atonement other works are required. These include LDS Church Membership, and obedience to the LDS Church through paying a full 10% tithing on your income, keeping the Ten Commandments, upholding the LDS moral code (The Word of Wisdom) and the law of chastity. This can clearly be seen again in the LDS Churches articles of faith. The third article states, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."<sup>3</sup>

The LDS Church in its teaching is adding Law (things you have to do) to the grace (the free gift that comes from God in Jesus).

### 2. Different Scriptures

Evangelical Christians believe that scripture is the sixty-six canonised (approved) books of the Bible. They believe that the Bible is complete and trustworthy.

In contrast to this, The LDS Church claims to have four canonised writings ("Standard Works"): The Book of Mormon, The Doctrine and Covenants, The Pearl of Great Price and the King James Version of The Holy Bible.<sup>4</sup> Inspired words of the LDS Prophets are also considered to be scripture.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 1:30.

<sup>2</sup> Preach My Gospel, p.70 (an Official LDS teaching manual).

<sup>3</sup> Gospel Principles, Articles of Faith. Note: 'Gospel Principles' is an official LDS Church manual written to help new members better understand basic doctrine and make the transition to gospel living.

<sup>4</sup> The Standard works are the "authoritative collection of the sacred books". (LDS Bible Dictionary, p.630).

<sup>5</sup> The words of the living prophet given at General Conferences are at least considered to be scripture (Gospel Principles, p.55, Teachings of The Living Prophets, p.21, Doctrine & Covenant Student Manual, p.144).

The LDS Church's teaching about the Bible undermines the Bible as the authoritative word of God. The LDS Church teaches that the Bible is mistranslated and incomplete.<sup>6</sup> This has allowed the LDS Church to 'retranslate' or ignore parts of the Bible that do not fit with LDS Church Doctrine as received by Joseph Smith and other prophets.

Joseph Smith retranslated many parts of the Bible on his own, despite having no access to the original language texts and no knowledge of Biblical Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic. Compare his translation of Romans 4:16a for example:

ESV (An Accurate Modern English Translation), "That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring"

KJV (Official Bible of the LDS Church), "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed"

Joseph Smith Translation, "Therefore ye are justified of faith and **works**, through grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed"

### 3. A Different God

The Bible teaches that God is the only God, the eternal God, the all powerful and all knowing God.

By contrast, the LDS Church teaches that God was once a mortal man in another world, subject to another god. As a mortal man, God was able to progress and achieved perfection; he was then exalted to Godhood in his own right.<sup>7</sup> The LDS Church also teaches that we too may be rewarded with Godhood according to the degree of our faith and obedience to LDS Church teaching here on earth.<sup>8</sup> This concept is foreign to the Bible and introduces the idea that there is not just one God, but many gods.

### Conclusion

Essentially The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cannot be a Christian church in line with Biblical Christianity because it teaches a different gospel, believes in different scriptures, and believes in a different God and multiple Gods. This is really to believe in a different Jesus to the one that presented in the Bible and confirmed by history.

These two conflicting beliefs, LDS Church teaching and Biblical Christianity, cannot be happily held together. On one hand Biblical Christianity states that a person is saved exclusively through faith in Jesus, and on the other hand The LDS Church teaches that a person is saved through Jesus as well as LDS Church Membership, Obedience, Tithing and upholding a moral code. Is it works or is it faith? Is it what you do or is it what God has done in Jesus? Both these positions contradict each other and cannot be considered under the same Christian banner. The differences lie at the very heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and how to have a relationship with God.

---

<sup>6</sup> Gospel Principles, Articles of Faith. The Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 29:3,6, 1 Nephi 13:26.

<sup>7</sup> President Joseph Fielding Smith, 'Answers to Gospel Questions', 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1963), 2:144.

<sup>8</sup> 'Gospel Principles' - Section 47 'Exaltation'.