

What Do Mormons Teach?

I spent fifteen years in Mormonism, all the while thinking that I was serving God. If you had asked me, "Agusta, are you a Christian?", I would have answered with a resounding, "YES!" Then I would have proceeded to tell you the following:

1. "God is my Father in Heaven."

Mormon meaning: God is a 6-foot, physical "exalted man." His name is "Elohim." Once only a mere human, he had to learn to become God. He has a father, and there are many Gods above him. He is *only* the "God of this universe."ⁱ

Christian meaning: Even though He is a personal Being, God the Father has never been human. He is the Creator, and we are the created. God has created the entire universe. He is the head of the Trinity and all things are subject to Him; there is nothing, and no one, who is above Him (Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:27-28).

2. "Jesus Christ is God's Son."

Mormon meaning: Jesus Christ was a spirit baby born to Heavenly Father and one of His goddess wives, "Heavenly Mother." They named him "Jehovah." God is married to many women, and he cannot create anything from nothing. He had to have sex with his wife in order to produce Jesus pre-mortally, as well as *all* of humanity by the same method. Lucifer, the Devil, is also one of Jesus' "Spiritual Brothers."ⁱⁱ

Christian meaning: Jesus, as God's Son, shares all of the qualities of God Himself. He lacks nothing. As such, He never came into being because He has always been. In addition, Jesus has power over the Devil. The Devil has never been a spiritual equal of Jesus, as he is a fallen angel, and all angels are subject to Christ (Matthew 28:18; Luke 10:18-19; John 8:58; Colossians 1:15-18; Revelation 12:7-9).

3. "The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead."

Mormon meaning: The Holy Ghost is a different God than Heavenly Father (Elohim). He has no physical body, and we do not know His name. He must not be confused with "The Holy Spirit" which is only like an impersonal electrical current.ⁱⁱⁱ

Christian meaning: In the history of Christianity, the title, "Holy Ghost," has frequently been interchangeable with the more common title, "Holy Spirit," when referring to the third member of the Trinity. They are not two separate entities, but instead, references to the same Being. The doctrine of the Trinity tells us that "God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God."^{iv} Therefore, the Holy Spirit is not a different God; He is God. He is a personal Being who has been sent to give us regeneration and help us live in obedience to God (Matthew 28:19; John 3:5-8; Ephesians 4:30 – Note: Only a personal Being can be "grieved.").

4. **"Jesus Christ is my Savior and Lord."**

Mormon meaning: Jesus (Jehovah) had to come to Earth to complete his test of godhood. While here, he was married (possibly a polygamist)^v and sweat blood in Gethsemane in order to "atone" for mankind and assure that we would *all* "gain resurrection bodies" someday. He is our "Elder Brother,"^{vi} and we must imitate him in order to earn and merit Eternal Life.

Christian meaning: Jesus did not earn His deity; He has always been God (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3). Yes, 1 John 2:6 tells us we must imitate Jesus by walking as He did, but our obedience to Christ is not a means to salvation. Salvation is a *gift of God*, which comes through our faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice of Himself on the cross for our sins (Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 2:2).

5. **"Jesus was born of a virgin."**

Mormon meaning: God (Elohim) came down to Earth and had literal sexual intercourse with his virgin daughter, Mary. She thus conceived the earthly body for Jesus (Jehovah).^{vii}

Christian meaning: The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit, not God the Father, was the One who impregnated the virgin, Mary (Matthew 1:18-21; Luke 1:30-35). This was not a physical act of intercourse, but rather, a miraculous act of conception through the Holy Spirit.

6. **"Jesus Christ is God."**

Mormon meaning: Jesus Christ is a God, one of possibly billions of Gods. Mormons are forbidden to worship or pray to him. They are *not* to have a "personal relationship" with him.^{viii}

Christian meaning: The Trinity doctrine tells us that there is only one God, not multiple gods. As a part of the Trinity, Jesus possesses the same divine characteristics of God the Father (John 8:58, 10:30). We are called to bow before Christ in worship and demonstrate our love for Him through our obedience to His commands (Philippians 2:9-11). Our personal relationship with Jesus is cultivated as we follow Him, in much the same way as He had a personal relationship with the twelve disciples during His three years of ministry on earth (John 10:27).

7. “Salvation is by God’s grace through faith and works.”

Mormon meaning: God only gives us the “grace” to be resurrected in a body of flesh and bone through Christ’s sweating blood and death on the cross. Eternal Life, however, must be EARNED and merited through personal worthiness.^{ix} This is called *Eternal Progression to godhood*. This is every Mormon’s goal. Our slogan in Mormonism is: “As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become!”^x

Christian meaning: Scripture tells us that we have been saved through faith in God’s gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are not saved through our own merits. Our worth, therefore, is found in our being created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26-27). God has called us to come under His authority. When we seek to elevate ourselves above God, we sin against Him. (See Eve in Genesis 3:1-6 and the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9.)

8. “I believe in Heaven and Hell.”

Mormon meaning:

“Heaven”: There are three heavens. They are called the Celestial, Terrestrial and Telesstial Kingdoms.^{xi} Most Christians and *unworthy* Mormons only qualify for the second, or the Terrestrial.^{xii} Worthy Mormons, who have become Gods and Goddesses, inherit the Celestial Kingdom. They will beget spirit children and populate their own Earths and planets, just like Heavenly Parents did. The Telesstial Kingdom is for the wicked, but still “glorious” according to Joseph Smith.

“Hell”: is only a temporary prison for all non-Mormons until the resurrection. Great missionary work is being performed there right now.^{xiii}

“Outer Darkness”: is where the Devil and the demons go, as well as apostates who have left Mormonism and have become “Sons of Perdition.” They remain there forever.

Christian meaning:

The Bible speaks of only two eternal destinations for humanity – Heaven or Hell. They are both literal places, and Scripture does not suggest that there is more than one Heaven. Hell is the place of eternal punishment for the wicked, while the righteous will enjoy eternal life in Heaven (Matthew 25:46).

9. “I believe the Bible is true, as far as it is translated correctly.”

Mormon meaning: The Bible was *not* translated correctly and there are many “plain and precious truths” missing in it, including whole books. According to Mormon Prophet Ezra T. Benson, it is not “*big enough, nor good enough, to lead this [the Mormon] Church.*”

Christian meaning: The Bible is not only true, it is also without error. The three common tests for works of antiquity (Bibliographic, Internal, and External) confirm the authenticity of the Bible. More importantly, Scripture itself proclaims that every word has come from God Himself (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Therefore, it is pure, perfect, and true (Psalm 12:6, 119:96; Proverbs 30:5).^{xiv} There is nothing that needs to be added or taken away from God’s Word; it is all we need for salvation (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19).

10. “I believe in all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.”

Mormon meaning: All spiritual gifts must be given from Joseph Smith Jr. through the General Authorities of the Mormon Church, channeled down to the recipient by the laying on of hands by Mormon priests.^{xv}

Christian meaning: Scripture tells us that all gifts come from God and are bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit Himself (James 1:17; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

I pray that all of you will *clearly* see the difference between Mormon teachings and the doctrine of the Christian faith!

Please remember, in spite of the same terminology, Mormons worship a false god; they proclaim another (false) Jesus, and they teach a false gospel! To see how seriously God considers this, see Paul’s strong words in Galatians 1:6-9:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of

Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

ⁱ Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 6, (1844) 3-5. Also see: Bob Witte, *Where Does It Say That?* (Grand Rapids: Gospel Truths)

ⁱⁱ Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 6, (1844) 8. Also see: Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 8 (1860) 268.

ⁱⁱⁱ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Volume 1, 39. Also see: Jerald & Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987, Fifth Edition) 171-172.

^{iv} Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 226, 231.

^v Orson Pratt, *The Seer* (1853) 172.

^{vi} Bruce McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Volume 4, 434.

^{vii} Orson Pratt, *The Seer* (1853) 158. Also see: Bob Witte, *Where Does It Say That?* (Grand Rapids, Gospel Truths) 4-7.

^{viii} Bruce McConkie, *Speech given at BYU devotional* (March 2, 1982).

^{ix} Book of Mormon, II Nephi 25:23.

^x Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 6, (1844) 3-4. Also see: Bob Witte, *Where Does It Say That?* (Grand Rapids: Gospel Truths)

^{xi} Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Volume 1, 283.

^{xii} Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Volume 2, 133.

^{xiii} Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Volume 2, 183. Also see: Jerald & Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987, Fifth Edition) 198-199.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 93.

^{xv} The Mormon meanings associated with the previous ten different doctrinal expressions come from Augusta Harting, *Families Against Cults of Indiana*, 26 April 2005 <<http://www.familiesagainstcults.org>>.