

Six Reasons Why Mormonism Can't Be True Christianity

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

WINSOME TV ADS INVITE PEOPLE to learn the teachings of Christ from the Mormons, who call themselves the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. The Mormons I know are moral people, wonderful people. Certainly Mormonism draws very heavily on the Christian vocabulary and on the Bible. But is Mormonism really Christian?

Examine with me the following six ways Mormonism has perverted, essentially changed, true Christian teaching, and see for yourself if Mormonism is really true Christianity.^[1] You'll observe that I have quoted original Mormon sources--the early authoritative prophets of the church--so you can understand the foundational principles of Mormonism as stated by Mormons. Understand, however, that the LDS Church is trying to back away from its rather bizarre origins and appear as another form of Christianity. Many LDS members are quite unaware of their history and the real sources of their faith. But consider the following six beliefs which are directly contrary to what the Bible teaches:

1. God has a physical body.

While the Bible indicates that God is Spirit^[2] and is invisible,^[3] Mormons contend that "The Father has a body of flesh and bone as tangible as man's."^[4] Early Mormon James Talmage states, "To deny the materiality of God's person is to deny God."^[5] In fact, Mormon prophet Brigham Young said that Adam is our God.^[6] To make God a physical human complicates the concept of Deity with sex.

[1] There are other Mormon distortions of Christianity, including baptism by proxy, "deacons" who are children, "elders" who are teenagers, a denial of the Trinity, salvation by works, other distortions of Jesus and His work, and the fiction that Jesus physically appeared to a group of Indians on the North American continent. We have chosen not to deal with them here.

You may be surprised that I quote the *Book of Mormon* against Mormon doctrine. In fact, the *Book of Mormon* does not support any of the distinctive Mormon doctrines about God. Mormonism had changed dramatically from 1830 when the *Book of Mormon* was published to 1844 when Joseph Smith died.

[2] "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

[3] "No one has ever seen God, but the only begotten Son who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18; see also John 6:46; 1 John 4:12) "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (Romans 1:20) "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17). See also 1 Timothy 6:16; Hebrews 11:27.

[4] The quotation continues, "... the Son also, but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones but is a personage of spirit ..." (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 130:22).

[5] James E. Talmage in *The Articles of Faith*, p. 48.

[6] He said, "When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize the world... He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do" (Brigham Young in *The Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 50, April 9, 1852). This doctrine is also found in a sermon by Brigham Young, delivered June 8, 1873, and recorded in the *Deseret News*, June 18, 1873, p. 308.

2. God in his physical body had sex with the Virgin Mary to beget Jesus.

Brigham Young declared, "He [Christ] was not begotten by the Holy Ghost ... Jesus our elder brother was begotten in the flesh by the same character who was in the Garden of Eden, who is our father in heaven."^[7] The Bible clearly states that Mary was a virgin, and that Jesus was conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit, not through sexual intercourse.^[8] Even the *Book of Mormon* affirms this.^[9]

[7] *Journal of Discourses* 1:51, April 9, 1852 and 4:218. Here is this Adam-God teaching again.

[8] Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:18-20.

[9] Alma 7:10.

3. God the Father was once just a man himself who evolved and progressed into a god.

Lorenzo Snow, former President of the Mormon Church, stated this flagrant heresy in memorable form, still quoted by Mormons: "As man is, God once was, as God is, man may become."^[10] Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, in a sermon given two months before his death, said, "...He was once a man like us, yea, that God Himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ did."^[11]

Now consider the implications of this: God Himself must have had a father. Smith asked provocatively: "If Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that He had a father also?"^[12] This meant that God must have changed and evolved. Orson Hyde, early Mormon leader, wrote, "Remember that God our Heavenly Father was perhaps once a child and mortal like we are, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement: has moved forward and overcome until He has arrived at the point where He now is."^[13] The Bible^[14] and, interestingly enough, even the *Book of Mormon*,^[15] strongly deny this. By no stretch of the imagination is this what true Christianity teaches.

[10] *Millennial Star*, vol. 54. Mormon writer Milton R. Hunter summarizes this: "Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the eternal father was once a mortal man who passed through the school of earthlife similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God--an exalted being, through obedience to the same eternal gospel truth that we are given opportunity today to obey." (In *The Gospel Through the Ages*, chapter 16, pp. 104f)

[11] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (second edition; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959) 6:305, April 7, 1844.

[12] Smith continues, "I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine, for the Bible is full of it." (Joseph Smith, *History*, 6:473-476, June 16, 1844). Mormon author Duane Crowther explains it so we make no mistake. "Joseph Smith explained that the Eternal Father of this earth

passed through a mortal probation on another earth just as Jesus Christ did here" (Duane S. Crowther, *Life Everlasting* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], p. 365).

[13] Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:123. According to modern teaching, even God the Father's godhood depends upon its recognition by others. Witness the writing of Brigham Young University Professor W. Cleon Skousen: "...The universe is filled with vast numbers of intelligences.... Elohim is God simply because all of these intelligences honor and sustain Him as such.... The Father is actually dependent upon their sustaining influence or honor to accomplish His purposes. God's 'power' is derived from the honor and support of the intelligences over whom He rules.... The present exalted position of our Heavenly Father was gradually built up. His glory and power is something which He slowly acquired." (W. Cleon Skousen, *The First 2,000 Years* [Bookcraft Publishers, 1976, p. 335]).

[14] "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8) "I the Lord do not change ..." (Malachi 3:6) "... From everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2).

[15] The *Book of Mormon* teaches: "For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing? And now if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles" (Mormon 9:9-10) "For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity" (Moroni 8:18). In this doctrine, the Book of Mormon is much closer to the Bible than is LDS teaching.

4. There are many different gods.

Does this sound like Christianity? It is basic to Mormonism. Joseph Smith taught, "In the beginning the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it." [16] Apostle Orson Pratt wrote, "In heaven where our spirits were born, there are many gods, each of whom has his own wife or wives which were given to him previous to his redemption while yet in his mortal state." [17] The Bible, on the other hand, consistently teaches only one unique God. [18] So, interestingly enough, does the Book of Mormon. [19]

[16] Joseph Smith, *The Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6.

[17] Orson Pratt in *The Seer*, Vol. 1, p. 37.

[18] See, for example: Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; John 17:3; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19.

[19] 2 Nephi 31:21b; 26:12; 11:7; Mosiah 15:2-5; 16:15; Alma 11: 26-29; 38-39; 3 Nephi 11:27b, 36. As you can see, the *Book of Mormon* also teaches the doctrine of the Trinity (2 Nephi 31:21b; 3 Nephi 11:27b).

5. If Mormon males are good enough in this life they can become gods themselves, and populate new worlds with their own offspring.

Mormons believe, as part of their core teaching, that, just as God the Father and Jesus are to this world, they can become like God and Jesus to the worlds they create.

Brigham Young taught, "In the resurrection, men who have been faithful and diligent in all things in the flesh ... and [are] worthy to be crowned Gods, even the sons of God, will be ordained to

organize matter,"[20] that is, to be creators in their own right. Rather than just being able to produce physical children, now they can produce spirit children.

Orson Pratt wrote, "Who will be the subjects in the kingdom which they will rule...? Their own children, their own posterity will be the citizens of their kingdoms; in other words, the patriarchal order will prevail there to the endless ages of eternity, and the children of each patriarch will be his while eternal ages roll on." [21]

Mormons ignore Jesus' teaching concerning marriage in heaven: "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven." [22]

[20] Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 15:137, August 24, 1872.

[21] Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 15:319, January 19, 1873. Modern Mormon theologian Duane Crowther explains, "Gods rule over their own progeny, and there is no exaltation without the ability to bring forth spirit children.... Those who gain the celestial kingdom but do not fulfill these obligations are limited to the role of servants, ministering to their exalted brethren." (in *Life Everlasting*, p. 341)

[22] Matthew 22:30.

6. In spite of the Book of Mormon's prohibition, Joseph Smith declared plural wives to be God's plan.

Strangely, the Book of Mormon condemns polygamy: "This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord." [23] The New Testament forbade multiple wives, too. [24]

But on July 12, 1843, Joseph Smith claimed to receive a new revelation that men were to have many wives and concubines, and declared it "a new and everlasting covenant." [25] Those who rejected it were to be damned. It appears that his first wife opposed the new wives her husband was bringing into his home. So he received a revelation specifically for her: "And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given to my servant Joseph ... But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord." [26] It must have been hard to have a husband who lusted after other women, and claimed to be God's spokesman.

Mormon leaders developed large families: Brigham Young had 17 wives and 56 children, [27] and Young's adopted son, John D. Lee, had 19 wives and 64 children. [28] Some Mormons have taught that Jesus had two wives, Mary and Martha, and had children by them. Of course the Bible says no such thing.

The Mormons traveled to Utah to avoid U.S. law which forbade polygamy, but gradually, enforced by the presence of federal troops, a federal governor was appointed and polygamy was declared to be a criminal offense in 1871. [29] In 1890, Mormon President Wilford Woodruff officially abolished polygamy as the practice of the Mormon Church, no matter what Joseph Smith had said about this being an "eternal covenant." As late as 1906, President James Fielding Smith, was convicted of practicing polygamy. [30]

While the modern LDS Church backs away from and softpedals such voices from their history, these are the founders. These are the prophets of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints.

You are seeking what is true, aren't you? Please read the carefully footnoted references in their context to make sure they were quoted accurately. Carefully read the Bible and see if it contains the

six heresies discussed above. Then decide for yourself. How can Mormonism be true Christianity?

[23] Jacob 2:22-23. This was directly contradicted by Joseph Smith in *Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:38. See also Jacob 3:5.

[24] 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6.

[25] *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:1, 4, recorded July 12, 1843.

[26] *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:51-56.

[27] *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1893 edition), article on "Mormons," p. 827.

[28] "Who Is This Man ...?" by Thelma Geer, privately published pamphlet.

[29] *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1893), p. 827.

[30] Reported in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 24, 1906, p. 1.

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