



5 | 5 Things about Mormonism



Some of the more noticeable traits in this group. See Section II.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. - Gal 1:11,12

The Mormons, known officially as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints represent the largest affiliated grouping of any religion which, while claiming to be Christian, is clearly outside of the mainstream of Christianity. It has officially declared all other Christian expressions to be apostate, and holds firmly to its claim to be the restored Church of Jesus Christ. LDS (Latter Day Saints) sects, commonly called fundamentalists, exist in a variety of expressions and are known for embracing polygamy, an essential element of early Mormon doctrine¹.

1.) Understand Basic LDS History

Mormonism originated with Joseph Smith during the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840), a period during which America and Britain were particularly fascinated with millennial speculation². Joseph Smith's testified visit of the angel Moroni (in 1820) and the discovery of the golden plates (the Book of Mormon) on the hill Cumorah in New York, set in motion the events which ultimately led the Mormons to the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847 under the leadership of Brigham Young³.

2.) Understand the *First Principles* of Mormons.

Mormonism is a *hybridization* of pagan and Christian thought in a palpable mix.

A. Pagan thought. From the pagan, or creation based perspective, the *core* of LDS teaching fits the essential pattern of neo gnosticism⁴, though Joseph's Smith's teachings were not strongly associated with gnosticism until recent years⁵.

Tidbit: Many Bible students are unaware that, after Judaism, the Bible devotes more effort to refuting the dynamics of gnosticism than of any other system.

Note: Everyday Mormons may not see this “connection with the universe” immediately and consider it unfair. Philosophical Mormons who embrace the gnostic aspects of Mormonism will understand the argument.

In this respect, Mormons are driven by the *twin* gnostic dynamics of *enlightenment* and *progression*. Therefore, to understand our LDS friends, it helps to have a good grip on Satan’s ultimate theology, or creation based worship. (See our article on that subject.)

1. Enlightenment. For a Mormon, enlightenment is a progressive experience which comes not only through cognitive processes, but through his mystical connection with the universe. Unlike Creator based worshipers, Mormons see matter as being eternal (albeit their view is that matter arose ex nihilo. Smith claimed that the Hebrew “barah” meant only that Elohim *organized* existing matter.) This is a hotly defended *first principle* of Mormonism. While the Mormon god, called Elohim (an elevated man), is neither omniscient nor omnipresent, he is able to communicate with men mystically. Nowhere is this more evident in LDS thought than in their reliance on the Doctrine and Covenants’ promise of an affirmative “burning in the bosom for truth seekers.”⁶

Remember, this notion of a universal mystical connection is at the basis of virtually all false thought and can be traced to early Babylonian, Egyptian, and Gnostic claims.

2. Progression. No one has refined the notion of progression more dynamically than the Mormon and nothing is more important to him. Again, we have already indicated that a first principle of Satanic theology as expressed in all creation based worship is, “I will be like

the most high...” Isaiah 14:14. Satan embraces progression. While Mormons use the term *salvation*, it connotes exaltation through progression in Mormon thought and has little or nothing to do with the biblical concept of being delivered from the penalty and power of sin in order to be glorified. Glorification, something God does for us once and for all as the end result of our election, can be seen in terms of our past, present and ultimate glorification (Romans 8:29-31). It represents our ultimate freedom from sin. Glorification for the non Mormon is in no way akin to LDS exaltation, which is a reference to the Mormon’s state in the next world.

B. Christian Hybridization. Essential to understanding Mormonism is knowing that the Book of Mormon’s cover declares it is “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” We are told that just as the New Testament replaces the dynamics of the Old Testament, so the Book of Mormon is the fruition of New Testament teachings and effectively supersedes it. Non Mormon Bible believers would quickly point out that the New Testament fulfills and completes the Old Testament and in no way contradicts it, whereas the Book of Mormon clearly contradicts both Old and New Testaments. Non Mormons would also point out that this same book claims to have been written hundreds of years before the King James Version of the Bible but quotes its dialect perfectly. Equally as significant, the other “authorized” scriptures of Mormonism extend the errors of that book exponentially. The only response provided by Mormons is that modern versions of the

Bible were clearly corrupted or “incorrectly translated”, though no evidence has ever been presented to establish the accuracy of these claims. Anyone who has ever had an in depth biblical discussion with a Mormon has heard the words “that must not have been translated correctly.”

Understand that the biblical view of progressive revelation means that God has revealed His truth over time. It remains unchanging truth which emanates from an unchanging God.

The issue of hybridization deepens. Because Mormon teaching begins with gnostic first principles, it must *redefine* virtually every Christian term in order to accommodate the gnostic first principle of progression. Its *god* must be progressive, its *revelations* must be progressive, and its view of salvation or *exaltation* must be seen as a consummate result of progression toward perfection. The salvation which Christ provided is thus reduced little more than making provision for men to return to the path of upward progression (though Christ serves other LDS purposes). According to Brigham Young, had Adam *not* exercised his “free will” and sinned, we never would have been able to progress. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches no such thing.

3.) Understand the Millennial Aspect of Mormonism.

Like Roman Catholicism and other sects, Mormonism openly declares that it is Israel and it is the absolute inheritor of her promises. The future Millennium she prophesies relates to her and not to ethnic Israel (now represented by the Navajo, an assumption now refuted by DNA analysis). A literal interpreter of the Bible is quick

As an aside, note the progressive fruits of allegorical interpretation.

1.) *Allegorical Interpretation, followed consistently, always ends with Replacement Theology.*

2.) *Replacement Theology inevitably leads to group claims of temporal authority.*

3.) *Claims of temporal authority result in establishing a temporal priesthood unique to that group.*

4.) *Claims to a temporal priesthood close off the way of salvation to any who do not submit to it. (Matthew 23:13).*

to understand that God has not replaced Israel and His Son will one day rule the world from ethnic Israel's throne. In the interim, Christ is working through His spiritual body and temple, the church, as He continues as a light to the gentiles.

As with Catholicism, this claim to be Israel includes the right to be called Christ's church *on earth*. The moment *any group* makes this claim to temporal authority it also insists that salvation (however defined) can only be secured through Christ's church, i.e. their church. This, in turn, requires a priesthood.

Again, like the Roman Catholic Church, Mormon replacement theology has led to the establishment of its own priesthoods, the Aaronic (ages 12-18) and the Melchizedekan priesthoods. The latter imbues its qualified men with all the apostolic gifts and privileges and is the basis for ordering all LDS ministry at every level.

Unlike Catholicism where priests carry out their temple ministries within the confines of their church altars, Mormonism places its emphasis on earthly temples where temple work is initiated and performed exclusively. There can be no Mormonism without temples, no temples without a priesthood, and no priesthood without replacement theology.

4.) Understand the LDS Beliefs which Result from these First Principles.

The disparate views between Mormonism and biblical Christianity are stunning and cover virtually every area of Bible doctrine. This will be expanded in our second article 5 Tools for Conversing with Mormons. For the sake of brevity, we confine our discussion to three critical areas.

A. The LDS view of God. The Mormon Elohim was once a man as we are, and has a material body of flesh and bones. He resides along with his many wives near the planet (or star) Kolob. From there spirit babies are produced in order to populate the planets. The scriptures are clear that there is one God, that He is a Spirit and that He is the creator of mankind. (Is. 43:10-11; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 21-22, John 4:24, Genesis 2 and 3.) For more information, see the article 5 Things About the Trinity.

B. The LDS view of Jesus Christ. Though LDS views vary, essential Mormonism sees Jesus as the result of the physical union of Elohim and Mary. He was not virgin born and attained godhood like any other man. Prior to coming to earth, He was the elder brother of Lucifer or Satan. The Bible asserts that Christ was in the beginning with God and was God, and that He was born of a virgin. (John 1:1-3, Matthew 1:18-21). As an aside, The LDS Journal of Discourses declares that Jesus was married to Mary and Martha because Mary called Him

“lord” a word which Mormons declare can also mean husband. The JOD also tells us that Jesus was the bridegroom at Cana and was married there so that He would be able to “see his seed,” before He died⁷.

C. The LDS view of Salvation. As noted earlier, Mormons see salvation as the achievement of celestial exaltation through good works. While Mormons teach that salvation is a gift, they redefine the word gift to mean something we must earn through strict obedience to the law. The Bible offers salvation as a free gift for anyone who will place his trust in Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 4:4-5). See our paper entitled 5 Things our Works Oriented Friends Need to Understand.

Equally important, Mormons deny the substitutionary work of Christ. His role as Saviour merely provided us with a means to achieve our exaltation. For a fuller understanding of the doctrine of substitution, see our paper 5 Things About the Substitutionary Work of Christ.

5.) Understand what the LDS Needs to Hear

1. He must not take the witness of men over God’s witness. Our own religious feelings must be second place to what the Bible teaches (2 Peter 1:18-20). If the LDS scriptures were true revelations from God they would *agree* with the Bible. The scriptures cannot be broken.

2. He, (along with the whole human race) has enslaved himself to sin and cannot remedy this through works. (Romans 3:10, 23). Our sin separates us from God and no amount of good works can remedy this. Seeking to gain the merits of heaven through our good works only adds to our debt (Rom 4:4-9).

3. A Mormon can *know* he has eternal life by believing on the Son (John 3:16-18,35). To have the Son is to have life. To deny this truth is to make God a liar (1 John 5:10-12).

4. A Mormon can become a new creation in Christ, with new life (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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¹The Community of Christ, (formerly called The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), lays claim to the prophesied lineal succession of Joseph Smith, while the Salt Lake City LDS trace their history and doctrines through Brigham Young. This brief study is devoted to the Salt Lake City Mormons only, and we will refer to them simply as LDS or Mormons.

² Ironically, these millennial speculations were all varied expressions of replacement theology, handed down by the “church fathers.” See The History of Religion in America, by Hudson, a Scribner publication. Other American sects such as Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, and Watchtower, all emerged from this same era of millennial preoccupation.

³ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Latter_Day_Saint_movement

⁴ See <http://www.waltermartin.com/forums/showthread.php?2496-Are-Mormons-Gnostics>

⁵ See also, <http://gnosis.org/ahp.htm> and <http://usminc.org/mormonism.html> for typical discussions on the subject.

⁶ See <https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/sections-1-9/section-9-your-bosom-shall-burn-within-you?lang=eng>

⁷ For a full discussion of this see: <http://www.mrm.org/jesus-married>

Additional Study Resources (*Not carte blanc recommendations*):

Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1997.

The Dangers of the Cults (DVD) by David Reagan and Ron Carlson. www.lamblion.com