

Mormonism

I. Mormon History

- a. Joseph Smith Jr.
 - i. Visited by God the Father and God the Son (1820) and is informed of the “Great Apostasy”.
 - ii. Visited by the Angel Moroni (1823)
 - 1. Gold Plates found in the Hill Cumorah
 - 2. Plates are translated and published as the Book of Mormon (1830).
- b. Book of Mormon
 - i. Content
 - 1. History of ancient semitic civilizations in America (600 BC to AD 421).
 - 2. Mormon is visited by the resurrected Christ and receives the true teachings.
 - 3. Mormon writes the history of these civilizations on gold plates.
 - 4. Lamenites kill all Nephites and become what we would call Native Americans.
 - 5. The last surviving Nephite, Moroni, the son of Mormon, buries the gold plates that are later found by Joseph Smith.
 - ii. Translation Process
 - 1. Reformed Egyptian
 - 2. Urim and Thummim,
 - 3. Done in private
 - iii. Problems
 - 1. Unhistorical
 - 2. Plagiarism
 - 3. Unsubstantiated by science or archaeology
- c. Westward Migration
 - i. Movement West
 - ii. Death of Joseph Smith (1844)
 - iii. Brigham Young and Salt Lake Valley (1847)
- d. King Follett Discourse (1844)
 - i. God was once mortal
 - ii. Humans can become gods (exaltation).
 - iii. There are many gods that rule over different universes.
 - iv. Matter and human spirits are eternal.
 - v. The Godhead is three separate beings united in purpose, not essence.

II. Mormon Cosmology

- a. Elohim
 - i. Also called God the Father or Heavenly Father

- ii. Made of flesh and bone, not a spirit (John 4:24?)
 - iii. Conceived spirit-children with heavenly mother (Us)
- b. Creation
 - i. Elohim wants his spirit children have mortal bodies so that they can become like him for his glory.
 - ii. Jehovah's (Jesus) plan vs Lucifer's (Satan) plan
 - iii. Elohim directs Jehova and Michael (Adam) to create Earth with existing matter.

III. Shared Vocabulary

Term	Historic Christian Definition	Latter-day Saint Definition
God the Father	Infinite, uncreated, eternal Spirit; transcendent Creator of all things <i>ex nihilo</i> .	Exalted man of flesh and bones (Elohim) who progressed to deity on a previous earth.
Jesus Christ	Eternal, uncreated Second Person of the Trinity; truly God and truly man.	The firstborn spirit child of Heavenly Parents in the pre-mortal life; literal elder brother of humans and Lucifer.
Trinity	One God existing eternally in three distinct Persons sharing one undivided divine essence.	Three separate deities united in purpose and harmony, but completely distinct in substance and body.
Grace	Unearned, unmerited favor through which sinners are declared righteous solely through faith in Christ.	General resurrection granted to all, plus divine enablement given " <i>after all we can do</i> " (2 Nephi 25:23).
Salvation / Exaltation	Full deliverance from sin, death, and hell, resulting in eternal life with God in heaven.	General Salvation: Resurrection to a kingdom of glory. Exaltation: Becoming a god in the highest tier of the Celestial Kingdom.
Fall of Adam	The tragic origin of human sin, spiritual death, and brokenness separating creation from God.	A necessary, positive step that allowed humanity to reproduce and experience physical growth (" <i>Adam fell that men might be</i> ").

Gospel	The good news of Christ's finished work on the cross paying the full penalty for human sin.	The laws, ordinances, covenants, and authority restored through Joseph Smith necessary for exaltation.
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IV. Modern Mormons

- a. Major Branches
 - i. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – Salt Lake City, UT
 - ii. Community of Christ (Formerly RLDS) - Independence, MO
 - iii. Fundamentalist Sects (FLDS, etc.)
- b. Institutional Revisions
 - i. Polygamy
 - ii. Racial Bans
 - iii. Re-classifying Doctrine as “Policy”

V. Evangelizing Mormons

- a. Strategic Principles
 - i. Clarify Definitions
 - ii. Focus on God’s Unchanging Nature
 - iii. The Weight of the Law Compared to the Gospel
- b. Prophetic Uncertainty
 - i. Due to the disavowing of former prophetic teaching, how can you be certain that the current prophetic teachings will not be disavowed in the future?
- c. Key Biblical Passages
 - i. God’s Unchanging Nature
 - 1. Isaiah 43:10-11
 - 2. Isaiah 44:6, 8
 - 3. Psalm 90:2
 - 4. Malachi 3:6
 - ii. The Finished Work of Christ
 - 1. Ephesians 2:8-9
 - 2. Galatians 1:8
 - 3. Hebrews 10:14