

Understanding the Differences Between Christianity and Mormonism

What the Bible Says About God	The God(s) of Mormonism
<p>There's only one God. (monotheism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me." (Isaiah 43:10) • "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4) • "I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God....there is none except Me." (Isaiah 45:5,21) 	<p>There are many Gods. (polytheism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I wish to declare I have always and in all congregations where I have preached on the subject of deity, it has [been on] the plurality of Gods." (Joseph Smith quoted in <i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i>, p. 343) • "...there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods" (Bruce R. McConkie quoted in <i>Mormon Doctrine</i>, pp. 576-577)
<p>This one God exists as three distinct persons. (the concept of the Trinity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All persons of God called God • All eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, can forgive, sovereign and righteous, responsible for creation 	<p>Worship three main Gods among multitudes of others. (strain of henotheism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...if by "the doctrine of the Trinity" one means...that God is three coequal persons in one substance or essence--then Latter-day Saints do not believe it." (Stephen E. Robinson, <i>Are Mormons Christians?</i>, p. 71)
<p>God has always been God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) • "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." (Rev. 22:13) 	<p>God is an exalted man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph Smith explained, "I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. 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 Himself did." (<i>LDS History of the Church</i>, Vol. 6, p. 305) • "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 this world. He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days about whom holy men have spoken -- He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do." (Brigham Young, <i>Journal of Discourses</i> 1:50-51, April 9, 1852)
<p>God has always been and will always be the same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I the LORD do not change." (Malachi 3:6) • "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb. 13:8) 	<p>God evolved and changed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We must accept the fact that there was a time when Deity was much less powerful than He is today...Then how did He become glorified and exalted and attain His present status of Godhood? As He gained more knowledge through persistent effort and continuous industry, as well as through absolute obedience, His understanding of the universal laws continued to become more complete. Thus He grew in experience and continued to grow until He attained the status of Godhood." (Milton R. Hunter, <i>The Gospel Through the Ages</i>, pp. 114-115.)
<p>God is the creator of all things.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In the beginning God created..." (Genesis 1:1-2:2) 	<p>God is the organizer of all things.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I might with boldness proclaim from the house-tops that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all, God himself could not create himself." (Joseph Fielding Smith, <i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i>, pp. 352-354) • "Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos — chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory." (Ibid. pp.350-352)

What the Bible Says About Salvation	The Salvation of Mormonism
<p>Salvation is a restored relationship with God forever. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...(John 1:12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Complete forgiveness of sins:</u> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin...(Ephesians 1:7) • <u>Eternal life in heaven with God through Jesus Christ:</u> I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:3) • <u>The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit right now:</u> Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance... (Ephesians 1:13-14) 	<p>There are different kinds of salvation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Unconditional or general salvation.</u> This salvation is immortality. It means to be resurrected and go to any of the kingdoms of glory. It refers to being saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment. And it comes to all men except the sons of perdition. • <u>Conditional or individual salvation.</u> By this is sometimes meant salvation in the celestial kingdom, which is reserved for those who obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel, although in the full sense it is limited to those who gain exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world. (Bruce McKonkie in Marvin J. Ashton's, "Q & A: Questions and Answers," New Era, Apr. 1971, p. 36) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Exaltation:</u> To progress in the celestial heaven and become gods and populate other worlds 2. <u>Celestial:</u> Mormon men and women who have fully repented of sins, and only if married in the Mormon Temple 3. <u>Terrestrial:</u> Moral people and Mormons who have not followed the gospel teachings completely 4. <u>Telestial:</u> Everyone else, servants of higher beings, saved from hell, 5. <u>Sons of perdition:</u> Whose beings are dissolved and reincarnated in another god's universe. (<i>Journal of Discourses</i> 1:118).
<p>Eternal life is being with God forever.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:17) • Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3) 	<p>Eternal life is being a god.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will become gods. • We will have everything that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have--all power, glory, dominion, and knowledge. (President Joseph Fielding Smith, <i>Doctrines of Salvation</i>, 2:36). • We will be able to have spirit children. We will be to them like God is to us. (All from the official LDS website www.LDS.org/library/display)
<p>Salvation is a gift that comes through faith.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. (Romans 3:28) • For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9) 	<p>Salvation must be earned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It is in the attainment of eternal life, which man must earn in mortality, that he reaches his full potentiality." (Marion G. Romney, of the First Presidency, at General Conference, October 1978, <i>Ensign, November, 1978</i>, p. 14) • "Living all the commandments guarantees total forgiveness of sins and assures one of exaltation through that perfection which comes by complying with the formula the Lord gave us.... " (Spencer W. Kimball, <i>The Miracle of Forgiveness</i>, pp. 208–10; emphasis added)
<p>Christ death was sufficient for salvation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1 Peter 3:18) 	<p>Christ's death gives you the chance to earn salvation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." (Joseph Smith, <i>History of the Church, Vol. 4, pp. 535—541</i>)

Since we don't have any original manuscripts of the New Testament, how do we know it's been translated accurately over the last 2,000 years?

There is far more evidence for the faithful translation of the original biblical manuscripts than any other ancient document. Historians consider two things when determining the reliability of an ancient manuscript for which no original still exists:

1. How old is the oldest copy in possession? The closer to the original date that a copy was made, the more reliable it is. The more time that passes between the writing of the original and the writing of the copy, the greater the likelihood for errors.
2. How many identical copies are in possession? The number of identical copies gives evidence to the accuracy with which the copies were made.

Author	Number of copies of manuscript	Date of Original	Date of Oldest Copy	Time Span Between Original and Copy
CAESAR	10	100-44 B.C	900 A.D.	1,000 Years
PLATO	7	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 Years
TACITUS	20	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 Years
PLINY	7	100 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 Years
THUCYDIDES	8	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 Years
HERODOTUS	8	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 Years
SOPHOCLES	193	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1,400 Years
EURIPIDES	9	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,500 Years
DEMONSTHONES	200	383-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,300 Years
ARISTOTLE	43	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,400 Years
NEW TESTAMENT	More than 24,500 copies	40-100 A.D.	125 A.D.	25 Years

The Historicity of the Bible: According to every standard, the Bible is the most well supported ancient document—religious or otherwise. The evidence is overwhelming for both Old and New Testaments.

Among the thousands of biblical manuscripts no significant variations exist, giving evidence to the accuracy with which scribes made copies. No archeological find has ever surfaced to contradict any historical or geographical assertion made in the Bible.

Acclaimed archeologist, William F. Albright said, "*Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details [in the Bible], and has brought increasing recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history.*" (W.F. Albright, "*The Archaeology of Palestine, Rev. ed.*," Pelican books, (1960), Page 127–128)

The Historicity of the Book of Mormon: Written between 1827-1830, The Book of Mormon is less than 180 years old. Additionally, all three men who were “witnesses” of the original golden plates ultimately apostatized and left the LDS “church” which Smith founded.

To date, no historical or archeological evidence to confirm the *Book of Mormon* has been found.