

Differences between Mormonism and Christianity

What is the Church?

Mormonism

The LDS Church is the only true church.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church ([Doctrine and Covenants \[D&C\] 1:30](#)); all other churches are "wrong," all their creeds an "abomination," and all who profess them are "corrupt" ([Joseph Smith, History 1:19, Pearl of Great Price](#)). One either belongs to "the church of the Lamb of God" or to "the church of the devil" ([1 Nephi 14:10](#)). Joseph Smith taught that everybody but Mormons will be damned ([History of the Church 3:28](#)), and the Book of Mormon teaches that if an individual doesn't repent in "this life" then one is sealed to the devil and "this is the final state of the wicked" ([Alma 34:32-35](#)). For LDS, this Book of Mormon passage typically means that apostates or these sons of perdition who willfully deny Christ and His Church after being a part of it end up in "outer-darkness" forever excluded from the presence of God in His celestial kingdom. But depending on how good the other non-members are in this life and the next determines their place in one of two lower heavenly kingdoms or "degrees of glory"--

Christianity

The church is a body of various believers and groups of believers.

The one true church is the invisible, spiritual, and universal body of Christ in heaven and on earth made up of all those true believers from various local denominations or visible churches. The body is an organism, not an external organization. Unity in this body does not demand complete uniformity in its various manifestations. God loves diversity. Yet the church's unity is in Christ, who is the vine. People in various denominations who are committed to the Vine are the branches; no one particular manifestation of the church is the vine ([Matthew 16:18](#); [John 15:5](#); [Acts 15:35-41](#); [20:28](#); [1 Corinthians 11:19](#); [12:13ff.](#); and [Ephesians 4:1-13](#)).

the *telestial* and *terrestrial* kingdoms-- both of which are still outside the presence of God in His kingdom ([D&C 76](#)). Whether there may be any possible advancement out of these kingdoms still depends on acceptance of the LDS Church as the only true church.

What is divine salvation?

Divine salvation is unconditional for resurrection and conditional for eternal life.

In one sense, salvation is universal immortality and resurrection by grace alone, and is given to everyone except apostates. In another sense, salvation is eternal life or exaltation into the highest kingdom. The latter is dependent on grace through faith and one's works ([2 Ne. 25:23](#); [D&C 76:40-44](#); and Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 669-671).

Where is the cross?

The symbol of the cross is absent.

Since the Savior lives, LDS focus on his life rather than his death. Though He suffered for our sins on the cross, the greater pain was in the Garden of Gethsemane where the atonement was initiated. The emblem of the cross is not to be revered, and its display is "very strange" ([Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Symbol of Our Faith,"](#)

Divine salvation is always conditional.

Divine salvation is always from sin and its consequence of separation from God. This salvation is always conditioned upon faith. Until this occurs, God considers the individual dead. When this salvation occurs, one has eternal life ([Jn. 5:24](#); [Romans 5](#); [Eph. 2:1-10](#); and [1 Jn. 5:10-13](#)).

The symbol of the cross is central.

Simply because Jesus lives forever more is no reason to minimize the means by which He paid for our sins. The Bible never teaches that the atonement began in the garden. Rather, it teaches that the atonement happened on the cross ([1 Peter 2:24](#)). The cross is foolishness to the perishing, but the power of God to them

[Ensign, Apr 2005, 2-6](#); [McConkie, "The Purifying Power of Gethsemane," Ensign, May 1985, 9](#); *Mormon Doctrine*, 172 and 555; *The Promised Messiah*, 337 and 552; *The Mortal Messiah*, 127-128; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:15-18; "[Cross](#)" and "[Atonement of Christ](#)," LDS.org).

Did Christ die for all sins?

Christ did not die for all sins.

Christ did not atone for the murderer, since there is no forgiveness for him "in this world, nor in the world to come." Christ also did not pay for more than a one-time offense of adultery, since such violators cannot be forgiven either ([D&C 42:18 and 25-29](#)). Actually, according to one apostle, Christ atoned simply for Adam's sin, and left "us responsible only for our own sins." This apostle goes on to quote the *2nd Article of Faith* that claims "men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (Le Grand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* [1976], 98). Other LDS prophets have taught that there are certain "sins" that one may commit that are beyond the atonement of the Son of God, and one's own blood must be shed in such cases ([Brigham Young, The Journal of](#)

being saved ([1 Cor. 1:18](#)). There is nothing else that deserves boasting except the cross of Christ ([Galatians 6:14](#)). The cross symbolizes a way His followers are to live ([Luke 9:23](#)). Even the first century Christians used the symbol of the cross as [archeology has revealed](#).

Christ did die for all sins.

Christ atoned for all sins (Adam's as well as everyone else's). The Lord Jesus took the punishment of everyone on the cross. The debt we could never pay has been completely paid by the Lamb of God, and to those who receive this gift, they are declared "justified" or "not guilty." This is the good news (the gospel) for everyone, including the adulterer and the murderer ([Isaiah 53:3-12](#); [Mt. 18:21-22](#); [Rom. 3:24](#); [4:5](#); [5:1-2](#); [1 Cor. 6:9-11](#); [15:3](#); [2 Cor. 5:14-21](#); [1 Pt. 2:24](#); and [1 Jn. 1:8-2:2](#)).

[Discourses 3:247](#); [4:53-54](#); [4:219-220](#);
and Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*
1:133-136).

What role do good works play with our standing before God?

Good works are meritorious for right standing before God.

Good works are a necessary requirement of salvation and right standing before God ([1 Ne. 3:7](#); [2 Ne. 25:23](#); [Alma 5:27-28](#); [11:37](#); [34:33-35](#); [Moroni 10:32](#); [D&C 1:24-33](#); [25:15-16](#); [42:18-29](#); [58:34-43](#); [82:5-7](#); *3rd Article of Faith*; *Gospel Principles*, 74-78 [1997 edition]; and [122-127](#)).

Baptism for the dead?

Baptism for the dead is required.

Baptism in place of the dead is an essential ordinance done in LDS temples on behalf of those who died not receiving the benefit of LDS baptism (*Gospel Principles*, [255-262 \[1997 edition\]](#)). Joseph Smith said, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" (Fielding Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 356 [pre-2002 edition]).

Are there other Gods?

There are many Gods for other worlds, and each God is equal to the God of this world in terms of His nature.

There are many gods who create and rule

Good works are not meritorious for right standing before God.

Salvation is a free gift that must be received through faith, not of works. If this is genuine faith, then it is automatically *demonstrated* by the overall good life produced by it (Ibid.; [Rom. 4:5](#); [11:6](#); [Gal. 3:11, 23-26, and 5:6](#); [Eph. 2:8-10](#); [1 Jn. 5:10-13](#); and [James 2:14-26, NAS](#)).

Baptism for the dead is not Christian.

Baptism for the dead is done by those outside of Christianity, since the Apostle Paul made a contrast between what "they" do and what "we" do. Paul said that even those who do baptism for the dead believe in the resurrection. How much more should we, who do not baptize for the dead and are led by apostles who were eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection, believe in the resurrection ([1 Cor. 15:29-30](#)).

There is only one God for all worlds.

There is only one God who created and rules over everything in existence. LDS simply devalue and weaken God when they

over other worlds, and on those worlds, worship excludes the God of our world. So there is only one God for us, and this God is typically referred to as the Heavenly Father. Mormons may also speak of the term "God" in reference to "the Godhead," which is a team of separate Gods (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 576-7; Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 346-7 [pre-2002 edition]; [Abraham 4:1](#), *Pearl of Great Price*; *Gospel Principles*, 245 [1997 edition], and 302; "God," *LDS Bible Dictionary*; and [Blake Ostler](#), "Review of [The Mormon Concept of God: A Philosophical Analysis by Francis J. Beckwith and Stephen E. Parrish](#)," *FARMS Review of Books* [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1996], 99-146).

The Trinity?

The Trinity means three separate Gods, who are one in their nature and become one in purpose.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate gods, who are one in purpose and nature, but not in a being they share eternally (Ibid; Fielding Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 372 [pre-2002 edition]). There was a time when the person of the Father (Elohim)

think that He did not create something like some other world ([Genesis 1:1](#); [Deuteronomy 4:39](#); [Nehemiah 9:6](#); [Psalm 96:5](#); [Isa. 40:12-26](#); [43:10](#); [44:6, 8, and 24](#); [Jn. 1:1-3](#); and [17:3](#)).

The Trinity means three inseparable Persons, who are eternally God in purpose, nature, and being.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct or different persons, who are eternally and inseparably one in purpose, nature, and being (Ibid.; [Mt. 3:16](#); [4:10](#); and [28:16-20](#)). So the Father is not the same person as the Son, and the Son is not the same person as the Holy Spirit,

was without the person of the Son (Jehovah) as His Son. Thus, there was a time in which Elohim was not the Father.

Are men and God the same nature or species?

Men and God are of the same nature or species.

The nature of these gods is identical to the nature of man, and as such these humans had to become gods; they haven't always been gods (Fielding Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345 [pre-2002 edition]; Thomas C. Romney, *The Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 46; [D&C 76:23-4](#); and [Abraham 3:18-28](#)).

Does God in His nature have flesh and bones?

God is an exalted man with flesh and bones.

God the Father and Jesus Christ have tangible bodies of flesh and bones, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit. Personages of spirit are still material with a certain form or shape, but they are not as tangible as the bodies of those who are sent to a mortal planet (Ibid.; [D&C 130:22](#); [131:7-8](#); and "[Spirit](#)" in the *LDS Bible Dictionary*).

Can human beings

Human beings may become Gods for other worlds as God is God for this

and the Holy Spirit is not the same person as the Father, but nonetheless, each Person eternally makes up the only Being of God there is.

Men and God are not of the same nature or species.

God has His own unique nature that man, a created being by definition, cannot ever have. God is God by nature, and not by obtainment ([Ps. 90:2](#); [Ezekiel 28:2 and 9](#); [Hosea 11:9](#); [Acts 14:15](#); [Gal. 4:8](#); and [2 Pt. 1:3-4](#)).

God is not an exalted man with flesh and bones.

Since He is the Creator of all things outside of Himself (e.g., the entire material universe), God is too big for a body. He does not need a body or anything else to operate anywhere in all of creation; He is all powerful. And since He is all powerful, He can take any type of form or nature to show up any way He wants to ([1 Kings 8:27](#); [Jeremiah 23:24](#); [Luke 3:22](#); and [Jn. 4:21-24](#)).

Human beings cannot become Gods for other worlds as God is God for all

become Gods for other worlds as God is God for this world?

world.

Worthy Mormons may become gods to create, rule over and receive worship from their own worlds some day. They will do this exclusively as the god or the team of gods for that world or that set of worlds (like the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are for this world or this set of worlds), and thus the God of this world will not perform those functions there (Ibid; [D&C 76:50-58 and 95, 132:15-23, 29, and 37](#); and [Gospel Principles, 302 \[1997 edition\]](#)).

Was the God of this world once a man who became God?

The God of this world was once a man who became God.

God is an exalted man, who needed to do certain things in order to become God for this world (Ibid.; and James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 430).

Does the Father have a Father?

The Heavenly Father has a Heavenly Father before Him.

God the Father has a Father whom He followed as Jesus had followed His Father in order to become a god (Fielding Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 373 [pre-2002 edition]).

Does God need a wife to become God?

God needs a wife to become God.

God the Father has at least one wife that

worlds.

When all believers become what some Christians such as C. S. Lewis call "gods" in heaven (although the Bible never uses this language of glorified individuals), they are still dependent and human "gods," and not God by nature, who alone is eternally the Author and Sustainer of literally all that is outside Himself. He is the only God in this fundamental sense of the term (Ibid.; and Lewis, *Mere Christianity* [N.Y.: Macmillan, 1952], vi, 160, 172).

The God of this world is the God for all worlds, so He never was a man who had to become God.

God has always been God, and thus is not so needy (Ibid.).

There was no Heavenly Father before the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There is no other God before God. He is not so weak that He needed to serve and receive counsel from some other God in order to become God; He always was God ([Ps. 90:2](#); [Isa. 40:12-26](#); and [43:10](#)).

God does not need a wife to become God.

He needed in order to become exalted to Godhood, and by at least one wife we on this world were all literally born as spirit children prior to taking on our tangible bodies of flesh and bones via our mortal parents (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 516-7; [Young, *The Journal of Discourses* 1:50](#); [Gospel Principles, 15 \[1997 edition\]](#); and the popular hymn "[O My Father](#)").

Is there anything that the Father did not create?

There are things that the Father did not create.

Thus God the Father did not create the planet that His Father had already created. No God for any world created all worlds. No God for any world created intelligence, matter, or the laws that govern them. These are eternal. Any person, including a God for any world, eternally existed as intelligence, and not as God (Fielding Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 373 [pre-2002 edition]; [D&C 93:29-33](#); [131:7-8](#); and [Abraham](#)

Since God is not a man by nature it is impossible for Him as the eternal God to even enter into a human marital relationship that He would need to become God and sexually produce us. It is just as impossible for God to lie. He does not need anything, let alone a wife, to become God. If it were even possible for the Father to strive to exaltation, then we would expect God's courtship and marriage to be a perfect one in which He received counsel from the other partner(s). But what kind of God would this be? As the All Perfect Being by nature, it is also impossible for God to receive any counsel (Ibid; [1 Kings 8:27](#); and [Hebrews 6:18](#)).

There is nothing that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit did not create.

There is only one Being who created and rules over everything in existence. LDS simply devalue and weaken God when they think that He did not create something like some other world ([Gen. 1:1](#); [Deut. 4:39](#); [Isa. 40:12-26](#); [43:10](#); [44:6, 8, and 24](#); [Jn. 1:1-3](#); and [Acts 17:24-28](#)).

Is there anything that the Son did not create?

[3:18-28](#)).

There are things that the Son did not create.

Jesus being the literal son of exalted human gods obviously did not create all things either. For example, He did not create the planet He was born on as a spirit child (Ibid.; [Gospel Principles, 17-20 \[1997 edition\]](#); and [27-29](#)).

Are Jesus and Lucifer spirit-brothers?

Jesus and Lucifer are spirit-brothers.

Jesus was the first one born of heavenly parents, and Lucifer was a younger sibling. Jesus is referred to as Lucifer's, as well as our, elder brother in the pre-earth life (Ibid.; Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, 15; [Abraham 3:22-28](#) with [Moses 4:1-4](#)).

Has Jesus always been

Jesus has not always been God.

Jesus, like all other gods before Him, had

There is nothing that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit did not create.

Prior to becoming man, Jesus existed as "the only begotten God" ([Jn. 1:18, New American Standard \[NAS\]](#) and in the best Greek manuscripts). As such, He created everything that was ever created from the very beginning ([Jn. 1:1-3](#)). When LDS relativize His creation to only concerning the things of this world or this set of worlds--i.e., not literally all worlds, this devalues and cheapens Jesus, who has not only the nature of man ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)), but also the nature of "God over all blessed forever" ([Rom. 9:5](#), emphasis added).

Jesus created Lucifer.

For LDS to think that Christ is simply our and Lucifer's elder brother in some supposed pre-earth life is blasphemous devaluing of Christ's divine nature. Christ may rightly be referred to as a brother in our humanity, but in addition to that, He is our Creator... and not simply of our bodies (Ibid.; [Colossians 1:13-18](#); [Heb. 1:2 and 6-14](#); and [2:6-18](#)).

Jesus has always been God.

Jesus has always been the only God there

God?

to become a God. He is the literal Son of God like we are children of God, but He's without sin (Fielding Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 346-7 [pre-2002 edition]).

Should the Son receive the same worship as the Father?

The Son should not receive the same worship as the Father.

Jesus is not worshipped equally with the Father, since Jesus is not our begetter. Jesus is not even directly prayed to. Prayer is directed only to the Father in the name of Jesus (*Gospel Principles*, 41 [1997 edition]; *McConkie, BYU Devotional* [March 2, 1982], 17, 19, and 20).

Who is the Holy Ghost?

The Holy Ghost is a man and son of God.

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the Holy Ghost is a spirit man, a spirit son of God the Father. It is fundamental Church doctrine that God is the Father of the spirits of all men and women, that Jesus is literally God's Son both in the spirit and in the flesh, and that the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit separate and distinct from both the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Eternal Godhead, and is identified also as the Holy Spirit, Spirit of

is along with the Father and Holy Ghost (Ibid; [Isa. 43:10](#); [Mt. 28:19](#); [Jn. 1:1-3 and 14](#); and [8:56-59](#)).

The Son should receive the same worship as the Father.

Since Jesus is God by nature, He is worshipped equally with the Father. Jesus receives both worship and prayer, and we are commanded to do so ([Mt. 4:10](#); [28:16-20](#); [Jn. 5:18-23](#); [14:14, NAS](#) and in the best Greek manuscripts; [Acts 7:59](#); [1 Cor. 1:2](#); and [1 Jn. 5:13-15](#)).

The Holy Ghost is God by nature.

Since the Holy Ghost is the inseparable third person of the only Being of God there is, He is not a man by nature that became exalted into a separate god for a Godhead team ([2 Samuel 23:2-3](#); [Mt. 28:19](#); [Acts 5:3-4](#); and [Acts 13:2](#)).

Is God a racist?

God, Spirit of the Lord, and the comforter" ([Encyclopedia of Mormonism 2:649](#); cf. [D&C 130:22-23](#); and ["Holy Ghost" in the LDS Bible Dictionary](#)).

God curses certain individuals with dark skin.

The races are determined by how worthy individuals were prior to this mortal life. Blacks were not as faithful in their first estate. The Book of Mormon teaches that God cursed certain Israelite American Indians with dark skin, and this was meant to keep them from interbreeding with their white brethren. This scripture also teaches that God blessed some who repented with white skin. Nothing concerning the revelation in 1978 to give "all worthy males members" the priesthood invalidates these beliefs (Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 1:61-7; McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 527-8; [Alma 3:6-9](#); [2 Ne. 5:21-4](#); and [3 Ne. 2:14-6](#)).

The Priesthood?

The Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods are offered to worthy male members.

There are two forms of the priesthood: the Aaronic (the lesser one) and the Melchizedek (the greater one). Without the

God does not curse anyone with dark skin.

God blesses humanity with different colors of skin, and no skin color is more favorable to Him than another. Race is not the real issue anyway, for we are all one in Christ ([Gal. 3:28](#)).

The Aaronic priesthood was done away at the cross and the Melchizedek priesthood is unique to Christ.

The Aaronic priesthood was done away at the crucifixion of Christ, since He has become our permanent high priest. There

authority of the priesthood no man can see God and live. It is available for all worthy male members of at least a certain age, who desire to act legally in the name of the Lord. This was extended to those males with black ancestry in 1978 ([D&C, Official Declaration--2](#); [84:6ff.](#); and Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 3:80).

is no more need for Levitical priests to offer imperfect sacrifices on behalf of the people in the temple. Jesus alone is worthy to hold the Melchizedek priesthood. Any believer today who has been called out of darkness into the light, regardless of age, race, or sex, is a member of the holy and royal priesthood. The believer operates in the highest authority that is offered today, viz., that of being a child of the Lord Omnipotent. Christians have the true priesthood, since they have the true God who gives it to them ([Jn. 1:12](#); [Gal. 3:26-29](#); [1 Tim. 2:5](#); [Heb. 4:14](#); [5:9-10](#); [7:11-8:2](#); [9:24](#); and [1 Pt. 2:5 and 9](#)).

The Bible?

The Bible is unreliable and incomplete for faith.

The Bible is the word of God only as it is translated correctly ([8th Article of Faith](#)). Evidently, it was not translated very well since Joseph Smith's translation (JST) is quite a bit different from all other versions (also cf. [1 Nephi 13:23-42](#) where the Bible is corrupted after the founding 12 apostles). Nonetheless, LDS use the King James Version. LDS also have three other books of Scripture--the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price (cf. [2 Nephi 29:3-14](#)).

The Bible is reliable and complete for faith.

The Bible claims to be the word of God, and the Bible--including Jesus--promised that it would be faithfully preserved. The general consistency of the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the thousands of other ancient manuscripts, lectionaries, and citations from early Church Fathers all attest to this fact. The Bible is by far the best attested work of antiquity. The Bible is archeologically, historically, prophetically, and scientifically accurate. And since the Bible contradicts all the

Joseph Smith taught that only LDS believe the Bible and "all other sects believe their interpretations of the Bible, and their creeds" (*History of the Church* [3:28](#)).

other scriptures of the LDS Church, they should all be damned ([Ps. 12:6-7](#); [Proverbs 30:6](#); [Isa. 40:7-8](#); [Mt. 5:17-19](#); [24:35](#); [Jn. 10:35](#); [17:17](#); and [Gal. 1:6-9](#)).