

Who Is The Mormon Jesus?

Mormon missionaries will often state quite emphatically that they believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They will point to the fact that the name of their church is "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." They will proudly quote their first article of faith, as found in Mormon scripture, which categorically states, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ...."

But what do they mean by the phrase "His Son, Jesus Christ?" Is it the same Jesus Christ written about in the Bible? Is it the same historical person who walked the earth nearly 2000 years ago? Did He bring God's final and full redemption to humanity? Is it the same Jesus who stands ready to forgive the repentant sinner today? Unfortunately it is not.

This paper will provide a brief sketch of the Jesus of Mormon theology, according to the statements of Mormon leaders. Many Mormons today try to dismiss these statements as merely the "personal opinions" of the persons quoted. However, it must be remembered that according to Mormon doctrine, and in their organizational structure, an Apostle of the Mormon Church has the same authority as any Apostle of the Bible (see, eg. Doctrines & Covenants 18:9; 1:38). When the Mormon Apostles speak it is just as if the Apostle Paul or the Apostle John (of the Bible) has spoken.

Beginning with His premortal existence, Mormonism pictures Jesus in a radically different way than does the Bible. Milton R. Hunter, a member of the Mormon First Council of the Seventy (a Mormon General Authority), wrote, "The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind" (The Gospel Through the Ages, p. 15).

According to the theology of Mormonism, Jesus and Lucifer are spirit brothers. They are both sons of God. This is not the Jesus of Christianity.

Regarding the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, Bruce R. McConkie, a recent Apostle of the Mormon Church wrote, "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 547). Defining the Mormon Church's position on what is meant by "Son of God", McConkie wrote: "And Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father. There is nothing figurative about his paternity; he was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events, for he is the Son of God, and that designation means what it says" (Ibid, p. 742

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When Mormons speak of the Virgin Birth of Jesus, they do not mean the same thing by that term as do Christians. According to Mormonism, God the Father, who has a body of flesh and bones, came to earth and had a physical relationship with Mary, his own daughter, thereby begetting Jesus' physical body (Doctrine and Covenants, 130:22; McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 471; Orson Pratt, The Seer, p. 158-159). Again, this is not the Jesus of Christianity.

With reference to His life on earth, many early Mormon Prophets and Apostles taught that Jesus was not only married, but that He was, in fact, a polygamist. One such Apostle was Orson Hyde. Orson Hyde was one of the original Twelve Apostles of the Mormon Church, who was ordained by Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

In a speech given by Hyde in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle, he exclaimed, "I discover that some of the Eastern papers represent me as a great blasphemer, because I said, in my lecture on Marriage, at our last Conference, that Jesus Christ was married at Cana of Galilee, that Mary, Martha, and others were his wives, and that he begat children."

"All that I have to say in reply to that charge is this - they worship a Savior that is too pure and holy to fulfil the commands of his Father. I worship one that is just pure and holy enough 'to fulfil all righteousness;' not only the righteous law of baptism, but the still more righteous and important law 'to multiply and replenish the earth.' Startle not at this! For even the Father himself honored that law by coming down to Mary, without a natural body, and begetting a son; and if Jesus begat children, he only 'did that which he had seen his Father do'" (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, p. 210).

Some Mormons today, especially recent converts, deny that Jesus was ever married - even saying they find the idea shocking. But if they have only to read their own history, the writings of their own Prophets and Apostles, or consider their own Law of Eternal Progression, to understand why many Mormon teachers have taught this about Jesus.

According to Mormon scriptures no one can be exalted to "eternal lives" without being married in this lifetime (D&C 132:7, 13, 15-16, 19-22), including Jesus. Though some pronouncements by Mormon leaders during the past decade have given to single Mormon women who wanted to be married, but were never asked, hope that they could still be married in heaven, Mormon males are still under obligation to accomplish this during this lifetime.

The ultimate purpose for Jesus' coming to earth, according to the Bible, was to provide

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his own sins, in whole or even in part, Jesus provided complete and absolute redemption for our sins. This, however, is not the view of the Mormon church.

Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth prophet of the Mormon church wrote, "But man may commit certain grievous sins - according to his light and knowledge - that will place him beyond the reach of the atoning blood of Christ. If then he would be saved he must make sacrifice of his own life to atone - so far as in his power lies - for that sin, for the blood of Christ alone under certain circumstances will not avail."

"MURDERERS AND THE ATONEMENT. Do you believe this doctrine? If not, then I do say you do not believe in the true doctrine of the atonement of Christ!" (Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, p. 134).

According to Mormon theology, Jesus is not the final and sole provider of salvation. This doctrine elevates the blood of the worst of sinners above the blood of Christ. This is not the Jesus of the Bible.

In fact, it is not just those guilty of grievous sins who must somehow supplement the atonement of Christ if they would be forgiven and receive eternal life in the "celestial kingdom." According to Mormonism, Jesus offers that as a free gift to no one. Rather, He is simply the one that makes the down payment. Each man and woman in the Mormon Church is taught that they must continually work for their salvation. Mormons are left enslaved to works, because they worship an anemic Jesus, who is incapable of completing the salvation process without their help. This Jesus is not the Jesus of the Bible.

When you share the Gospel with a Mormon, be aware that while both of you may be speaking about someone named Jesus, you are, in fact, speaking about two different and distinct persons. One is the Jesus of the Bible; the other is a heretical counterfeit.