

“MORMONISM” IS BOTH CHRISTIAN AND BIBLICAL

By Jon M. Taylor, Ph.D.

I should like to respond to sincere Bible believers who claim Mormons are a cult or are not Christian and that their history and doctrines do not line up with the Bible.

We could make the case from inspired teachings and prophecies in the Bible that all the fundamental claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (nicknamed “Mormons” or “LDS”) are Biblical and true. For example:

▶ That the true nature of God as a glorified personal being with a body as tangible as man’s and that in fact we are created in his image, as was Jesus Christ himself. (Genesis 1:26, James 3:9, Hebrews 1:1-3)

▶ That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three separate beings, united to such a degree that they are one in purpose and action. (Luke 3:21, John 17:1-26, Acts 7:55-56, Hebrews 1:3). When Christ prayed, he was not praying to himself, but to the Father (Matthew 26:42, John 17:1-26). When he was baptized – and when transfigured on the mount – he was not playing ventriloquist when a voice from heaven testified, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) And when he was crucified, he did not ascend to himself, but to his Father, who is also our Heavenly Father. (John 20:17)

▶ That though LDS teachings about God do not agree with widely accepted creeds that originated long after the death of the apostles, they do line up with the inspired teachings of the Bible.

▶ That through the atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind can be saved, by repentance and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, as given by Jesus Christ. (Matthew 5:19-20; Luke 13:3; John 14:21; Acts 2:38, 5:29-32; Revelation 2:14)

▶ That a man must be called of God, not by a mere feeling or whim, but by prophecy and the laying on of hands by those in

authority to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof – as was done in Biblical times. (John 15:16, Luke 10:1, Hebrews 5:4)

▶ That the same organization and gifts that Christ established in the primitive church will be in Christ’s church today. (Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11, 27-31)

▶ That the Church of Jesus Christ, which was founded on apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone, was lost from the earth in a universal apostasy following the death of the apostles in the primitive church. (Isaiah 29:9-14; 60:2; Amos 8:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Ephesians 2:19-21)

▶ That a restitution or restoration of all things would occur in these latter days, including prophecy and revelation from God to man through living prophets. (Matthew 23:34, Acts 3:19-21)

▶ That this restoration did occur through the appearance of God and Jesus Christ to a modern prophet, with a succession of angelic ministrations as attested by numerous faithful witnesses. (Joseph Smith – History 1:1-75)

▶ That while the prophets who wrote the books that make up the Bible were divinely inspired, the Bible is correct only insofar as it is translated correctly and that many inspired books are missing from the Bible. (Exodus 24:4; Numbers 21:14; 1 Samuel 1:18; 2 Chronicles 9:21, 12:15, 33:19; Matthew 2:23; Jude 14; et al)

▶ That God’s desire to reveal himself to man did not cease with the publication of the Bible, but that *The Book of Mormon – Another Testament of Christ* and many other revelations have been given to man in these latter days to bring us to Christ in preparation for his millennial reign on earth. (Isaiah 29: 1-4, Ezekiel 37:15-20)

We could point to hundreds of additional Bible scriptures to support these claims. And we could argue their meaning. However, we must

interpret scripture as the Bible directs – not by private interpretation but by prayer and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:20-21, James 1:5-6 – the scripture that led to Joseph Smith’s First Vision. See Joseph Smith – History 1:11-20)

But I have a better idea. I would challenge anyone who questions the Biblical origin and Christian commitment of Latter-days Saints (“Mormons” – or “LDS”) to apply the test that Jesus Christ himself gave to discern true from false prophets – and to recognize the followers of Christ’s true prophets which he promised to send (Matthew 23:34). You will find in the Sermon on the Mount the test given by the Savior himself:

“Ye shall know them by their fruits.”
(Matthew 7:15-20)

What are the fruits of Mormonism or of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – and of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith, which we believe continues to be led by inspired prophets today?

While there are exceptions, with some Latter-day Saints not living their religion, look at Mormons you have known and at the LDS culture as a whole and ask yourself:

▶ Are they honest in their dealings with their fellow man? Can you trust them?

▶ Do they generally live clean lives, free of illicit sex?

▶ Do they honor their marital covenants and are they faithful to their spouses and dedicated to building righteous families? How do they treat their children?

▶ Do they honor their bodies by avoiding alcohol, tobacco, addictive drugs, and other harmful substances? Are they generally healthier than those who do not live by such strict codes?

▶ Do they as a people seek education and development of their talents that they may better serve their fellow man? Do they donate generously of their time and means to worthy causes?

▶ Do they love their neighbor? And are they diligent in spreading the restored gospel

of Jesus Christ as they understand it to others?

Now for the acid test. Without announcing your intentions, stop in on a congregation of Latter-day Saints in your community and attend some of their meetings. Pay attention to the prayers, singing, ordinances, and instruction given. Is everything done in the name of Jesus Christ? Is the attitude of those officiating and teaching one of humility and charity? More importantly, how do you feel inside when – with a humble (open-minded) and prayerful attitude – you attend their worship services and instruction periods?

If you have questions, ask for the missionaries, many of whom are called to donate two years of their lives sharing the gospel with those seeking truth about Jesus Christ and his gospel. You need not commit to anything they tell you without praying directly to Heavenly Father in the name of Christ for confirmation that what they are telling you is true. (Matthew 7:7-8, James 1:5-6.) The Book of Mormon also challenges the reader to ask God in the name of Christ “if these things are not true.” (Moroni 10:3-5)

And of course, the acid test of Mormons as Christians is the application of the principles found in the Book of Mormon and in modern revelation to one’s personal life. Millions have testified of the peace and joy that follows.

Again: “Ye shall know them by their fruits.”