



WORLD RELIGIONS & MORMONISM

APOLOGETICS—DEFENDING YOUR FAITH

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WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT,
“WORLD RELIGIONS?”



UNDERSTANDING WORLD RELIGIONS

FIVE ATTRIBUTES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

- **THEOLOGY**

- What are the views of their gods, including nature, purpose, and habitation?

- **ANTHROPOLOGY**

- What are the views of mankind, our origin, and the nature of people?

- **SOTERIOLOGY**

- What are the views about sin, salvation, and redemption?

- **EPISTEMOLOGY**

- What are the views about knowledge, such as authoritative texts or leaders?

- **METAPHYSICS**

- What are the views about the laws of nature, the afterlife, and invisible forces?

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

REALITY VS ILLUSION

Concept—Existence is just a dream or a vision. We may not even exist.

Sample Religions—Buddhism, Simulation-ists (people who believe we are part of a computer simulation)

Biblical Perspectives

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)”

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

All things were created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

THEISTIC VS ATHEISTIC

Concept—There is no God.

Sample Religions—Atheism, Communism, Scientology

Biblical Perspectives

“The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.’ (Psalm 14:1a)”

“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. (Psalm 19:1-2)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

TRANSCENDENT VS PANTHEISTIC

Concept—God exists in nature, nature is to be worshipped, or there is no distinction between the natural world and God.

Sample Religions—Shintoism, Paganism, Druidism, Shamanism, Wiccan

Biblical Perspectives

“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:22-23)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

MONOTHEISTIC VS POLYTHEISTIC

Concept—There is more than one god, or the one god presents himself as a variety of gods with differing traits, some of which may be evil.

Sample Religions—Hinduism, Taoism, Norse Religions, Greek & Roman Mythology, Egyptian Mythology

Biblical Perspectives

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.[’] (Isaiah 44:6)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

ABRAHAMIC VS NON-ABRAHAMIC

Concept—The one true god has been revealed through sources other than by Abraham.

Sample Religions—Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Baha'i

Biblical Perspectives

“Moreover He said, ‘I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:6)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

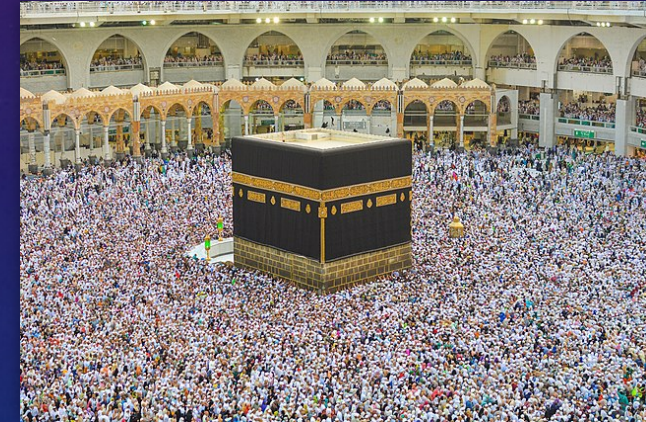
JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VS NON-JUDEO CHRISTIAN

Concept—The one true god—although revealed through Abraham’s descendants — is not YAHWEH.

Sample Religions—Islam

Biblical Perspectives

“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

CHRISTENDOM VS NON-MESSIANIC / FAUX-MESSIANIC

Concept—Jesus is not the Jewish Messiah, there is another Messiah, or Messiah has not yet come.

Sample Religions—Judaism, Rastafarianism

Biblical Perspectives

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’ (John 4:25-26)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

HISTORIC VS CULTIC

Concept—Special revelation is needed to understand the Bible or to access God, typically through relatively modern religious institutions.

Sample Religions—Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism, Christian Scientist, Satanism

Biblical Perspectives

“Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:26-27)”



RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

CHRISTIAN VS CATHOLIC / ORTHODOX

Concept—Knowledge of God comes through a regulated church and salvation by works, rather than through the Bible and by faith.

Sample Religions—Roman Catholicism, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Coptic Churches

Biblical Perspectives

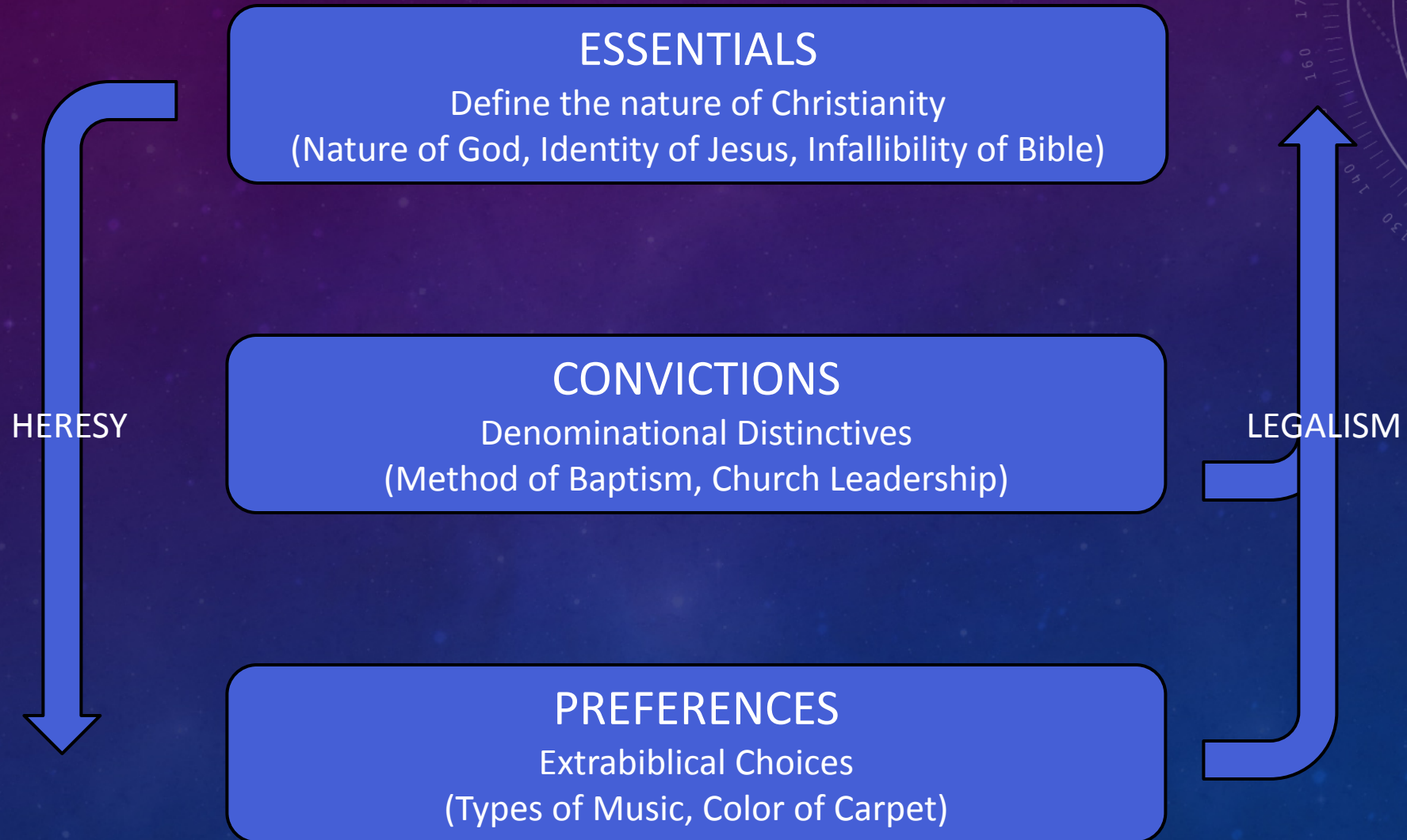
“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)”



KEY RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

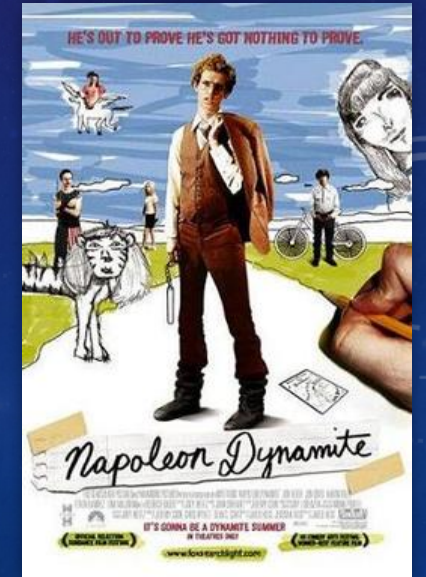
	OTHER RELIGIONS	CHRISTIANITY
THEOLOGY	One god, many gods, or no gods, varying in terms of nature and activity with man.	One God in three Persons—The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, perfect and holy (1 John 5:7).
ANTHROPOLOGY	Man is basically good, with the ability to improve himself.	Man is fallen due to Original Sin and needs redemption (Romans 3:23).
SOTERIOLOGY	Salvation is based upon works and effort.	Salvation is based upon grace by faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ, alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).
EPISTEMOLOGY	Revelation comes from a variety of sources, often provided through visitation by an angel of light.	Revelation came through the Bible as written by the prophets and now through Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2).
METAPHYSICS	Ranges from reincarnation to purgatory to annihilation.	There is a Heaven and Hell, and everyone will go to one of these locations based upon their faith in Christ (Hebrews 9:27).

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES



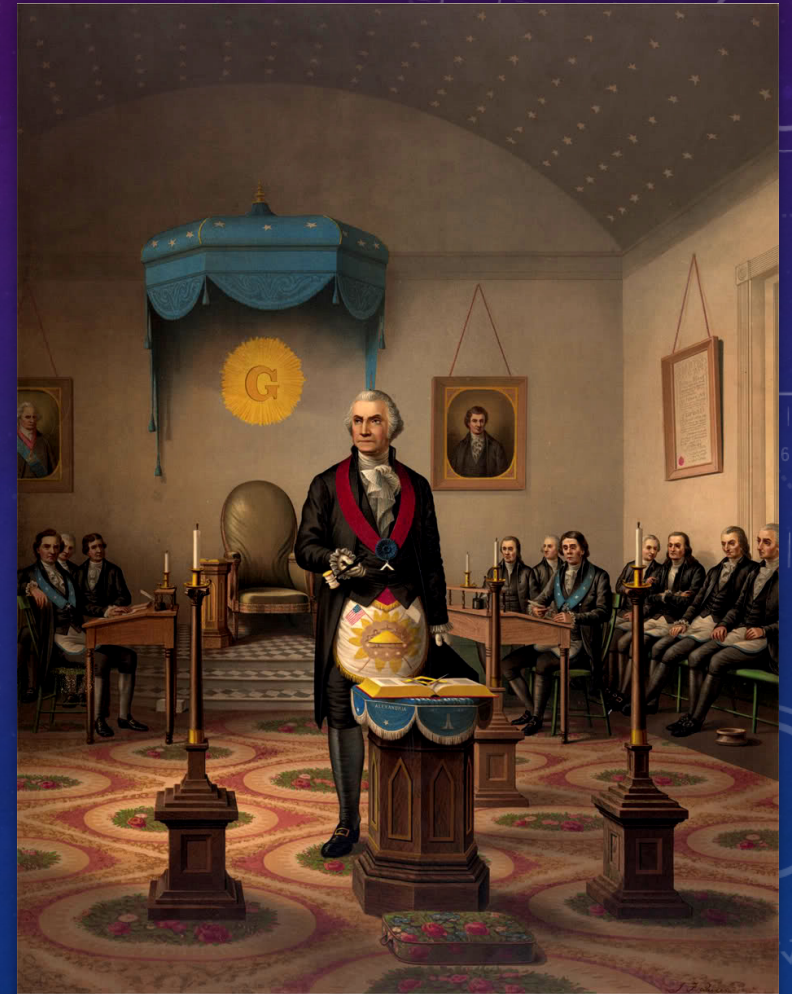
UNDERSTANDING MORMONISM

The background is a gradient of deep blue and purple, speckled with white dots resembling a starry sky. Overlaid on this are several faint, white geometric patterns. In the top right, there is a large circular scale with degree markings from 0 to 210 and concentric circles. In the bottom right, there are concentric circles with arrows indicating a clockwise direction. In the bottom left, there are partial concentric circles and a dashed arrow pointing left. In the top left, there is a small circular arc with an arrow pointing left.



AMERICAN HISTORY CIRCA 1800

- The United States became a nation just 25 years earlier.
- The Second Great Awakening—a large Christian revival—swept parts of the country.
- Freemasonry took an upswing following the American Revolution.
- Westward expansion occurring with the acquiring of the Louisiana Purchase.



Washington As Master Mason.

Presiding over a meeting of the LODGE, at ALEXANDRIA, VA. (of which he was a member) convened preparatory to the laying of the Corner Stone of the National Capitol by him on the 18th, of September, 1793. The furniture of the Lodge with which the Grand and Supreme used by WASHINGTON has been carefully preserved, is here represented as they appeared on that occasion. The apron was embroidered and presented to Washington by the Mastermasons of Lafayette.

JOSEPH SMITH



- Born in 1805 in Vermont, moved to farm in Palmyra, New York in 1816.
- Fifth of eleven children, suffered bone infection as child and used crutches for three years.
- Became interested in religion in his youth, spent time as a treasure finder.

FIRST SUPERNATURAL VISION

- Claimed to have seen God The Father and Jesus Christ while praying in 1820.
- Told that all denominations had, “turned aside from the Gospel.”
- Wrote four different accounts of this vision between 1832 and 1842, varying in numbers of spiritual beings.



SECOND SUPERNATURAL VISION

- Claimed to be visited by an angel named, “Moroni,” at Cumorah, NY.
- Directed to dig and find hidden golden plates in the ground along with other historical artifacts.
- Visited the location annually between 1823 and 1827 before being allowed to remove the objects.

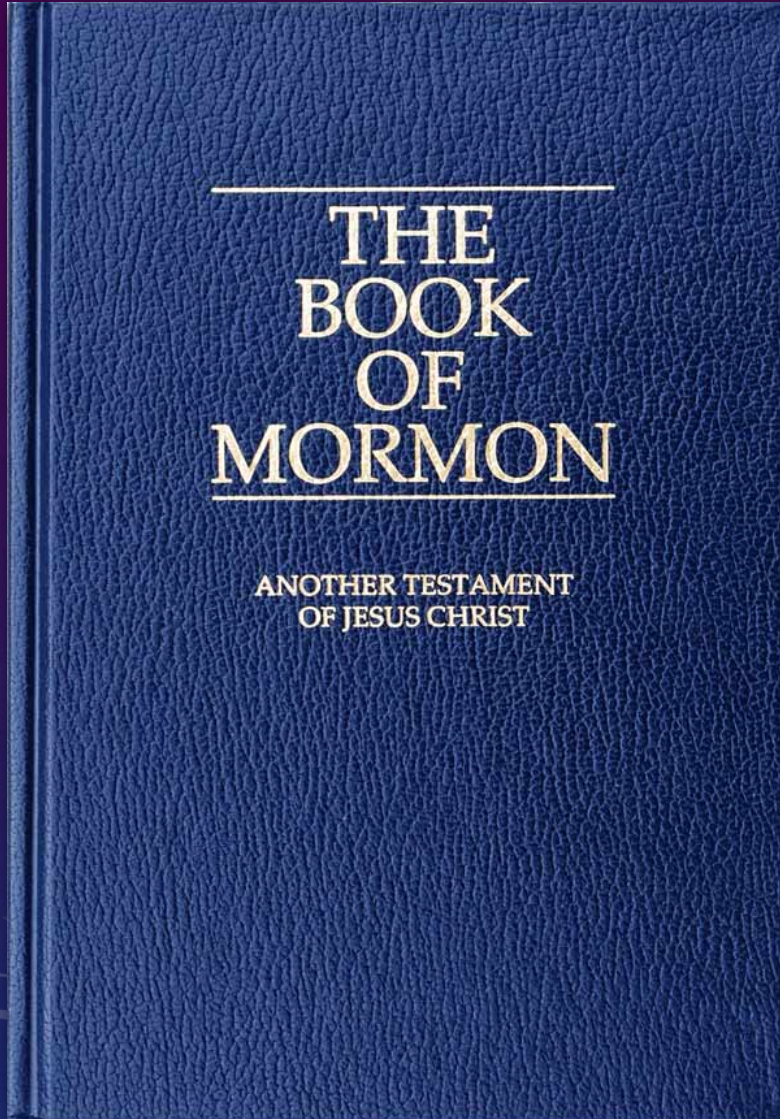


INITIAL WRITINGS

- Began translating the texts from, “Reformed Egyptian,” by use of a seer stone in a hat.
- Original 116 pages of translation of the Book of Lehi lost by friend/scribe.
- Moroni allegedly took the objects away before returning them a few days later, allowing Smith to start a new book.



BOOK OF MORMON



- Initial version completed in 1830, comprised of 15 smaller books/chapters.
- Depicts a story of ancient Israelites journeying across the Atlantic to settle in the West and eventually becoming the Native Americans.
- Claims that Jesus Christ visited two American nations—the Lamanites and Nephites—and shared the Gospel following His resurrection.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS

- Doctrine & Covenants—A set of teachings and revelations given to leaders of Mormonism.
- The Pearl of Great Price—Made of five sections of interpretations by Joseph Smith.
- The Bible—“Insofar as it has been translated correctly,” typically the King James Version.

THE
DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS
OF
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Containing Revelations Given to
JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET

With some Additions by his Successors
in the Presidency of the Church

PUBLISHED BY
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, U. S. A.
1921

MORMON THEOLOGY



VIEWS OF GOD

Mormonism teaches that their god (Elohim) was once a man who followed their teachings and became elevated, is one of many gods, and was given his own planetary system (Kolob) from which he rules. The Bible is clear that there are no other gods except for God.

MORMONISM

- “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret.”
Joseph Smith, The King Follett Discourse, April 7, 1884
- “As man now is, God once was:
As God now is, man may be.”
Lorenzo Snow, Fifth LDS Church President

CHRISTIANITY

- “Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever
You had formed the earth and the world, Even from
everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (Psalm 90:2)”
- “God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Has He said, and will He not do?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
(Numbers 23:19)”

VIEWS OF CHRIST

Mormonism teaches that Jesus Christ (Jehovah) was a created being, the spirit brother of Lucifer and all humans, whose plan of redemption was accepted in a heavenly council. The Bible teaches that Jesus is part of the Trinity and created all things including Satan.

MORMONISM

- “The contention in heaven was—Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ.”
Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1938, p. 357
- “And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him. (Pearl of Great Price, Book of Abraham 3:27-28)”

CHRISTIANITY

- “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:16-17)”
- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:1-3)”

VIEWS OF THE ORIGIN OF MANKIND

Adam was the archangel Michael, the, “Ancient of Days,” and had a role in creation according to Mormonism. The Bible clearly differentiates between Adam and Michael as two distinct beings and identifies God as the Ancient of Days.

MORMONISM

- “As Michael, the archangel, Adam led the forces of God against the armies of Lucifer in the War in Heaven. Under the direction of Elohim and Jehovah, he assisted in the Creation of the earth. Adam and Eve brought mortality into being through partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”
Robert L. Millet, “The Man Adam,” Liahona, Feb 1998, 14.
- “Among the great and mighty ones who were assembled in this vast congregation of the righteous were Father Adam, the Ancient of Days and father of all, And our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters who had lived through the ages and worshiped the true and living God.”
Doctrine & Covenants 138:38-39

CHRISTIANITY

- “What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor. (Psalm 8:4-5)”
- “I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow,
And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire; (Daniel 7:9)”

VIEWS OF SALVATION

Mormonism has a works-based view of salvation, where believers must perform various actions, and Jesus makes up the difference. The Bible is clear that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, and not by one's good deeds.

MORMONISM

- “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do. (2 Nephi 25:23)”

CHRISTIANITY

- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)”

VIEWS OF TEMPLES

Mormon temples are special religious buildings accessible only to good Mormons to perform rituals and learn secret knowledge to enter Heaven with multiple temples across the globe historically. The Bible says that God ordained the creation of only one Temple in Jerusalem, and that Christians are now the Temple of The Holy Spirit.

MORMONISM

- “And Alma and Amulek went forth preaching repentance to the people in their temples, and in their sanctuaries, and also in their synagogues, which were built after the manner of the Jews. (Alma 16:13)”
- “Speaking to his people on April 8, 1844, the Prophet Joseph said that the temple ordinances as he was giving them were so important that ‘without (them) we cannot obtain celestial thrones. But there must be a holy place prepared for that purpose.’”
Elder Mark E. Petersen Of the Council of the Twelve, “Why We Build Temples”

CHRISTIANITY

- “But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. (Deuteronomy 12:5)”
- “Because of Your temple at Jerusalem, Kings will bring presents to You. (Psalm 68:29)”
- “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)”

PRAYER CIRCLE VIDEO

VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE

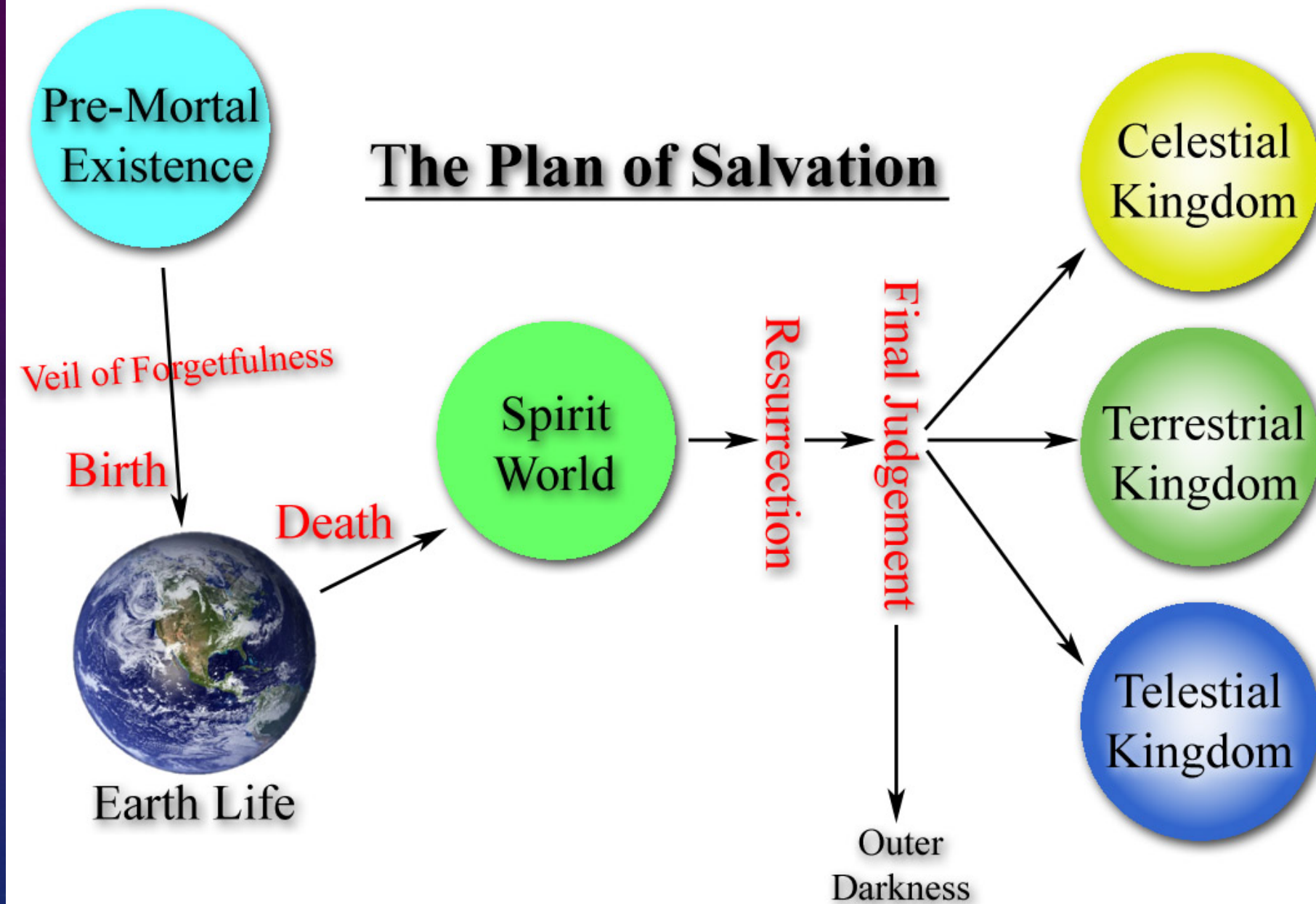
There are three different types of Heaven in the afterlife according to Mormonism—Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial. Depending on how one lives, one can ascend into godhood and receive a planet to rule. Few people will experience, “Outer Darkness.” The Bible is clear that people die, are judged, and will go to Heaven or Hell.

MORMONISM

- “And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn who have received the fulness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.
Behold, these are they who died without law;
And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh;
Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.
These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.
These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.
(Doctrine & Covenants 76:71-76)”

CHRISTIANITY

- “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10:14)”
- “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, (Hebrews 9:27)”
- “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)”



VIEWS OF ENTERING THE AFTERLIFE

Mormonism teaches that secret handshakes, tokens, and names are the means by which people gain access to the Celestial Kingdom. The Bible says that Jesus is the way to Heaven, once a believer dies, he or she immediately goes to the Lord.

MORMONISM

- “We live in a world of symbols. No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand. (John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, April 1921, p. 62)”
- “Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell. (Discourses of Brigham Young, comp. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971).”

CHRISTIANITY

- “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)”
- “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)”
- “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. (Psalm 17:15)”

SECRET HANDSHAKE VIDEO

VIEWS OF BAPTISM

Mormonism teaches that baptism is a requirement for salvation and that people can be proxy baptized on behalf of dead people. The Bible shows that baptism is an act of obedience for living believers to show outwardly inner faith.

MORMONISM

- “Since baptism was an ordinance requiring immersion in water for all, whether living or dead, and since there was no way in which to baptize the dead personally, living people were properly baptized for and in behalf of the dead.”
Elder Mark E. Petersen Of the Council of the Twelve, “Why We Build Temples”
- “For this ordinance [baptism for the dead] belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. (Doctrine & Covenants 124:30)”

CHRISTIANITY

- “There is also an antitype which now saves us— baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 3:21)”
- “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)”

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD VIDEO

VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

Mormonism teaches that marriage is eternal for producing spirit children. Previously, Mormonism taught that polygamy was lawful (1846 to 1890) and a requirement for salvation. The Bible teaches that marriage is for this world and intended to be between one man and one woman for one life.

MORMONISM

- “This principle [polygamy] was given for a purpose, and that purpose is the salvation of the female sex as well as the male sex. (Journal of Discourses 26:181, John H Smith, 1885)”
- “Brother _[last name]_, do you take Sister _[last name]_ by the right hand and receive her unto yourself to be your lawfully wedded wife (give yourself to him to be his lawfully wedded wife, and receive him to be your lawfully wedded husband), **for time and all eternity**, with a covenant and promise that you will observe and keep all the laws, rites, and ordinances pertaining to this holy order of matrimony in the new and everlasting covenant; and this you do in the presence of God, angels, and these witnesses of your own free will and choice? (Mormon marriage vows)”

CHRISTIANITY

- “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)”
- “For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. (Mark 12:25)”

EVIDENTIARY PROBLEMS WITH MORMONISM

Beyond the conflicts and contradictions with the Bible, there are also multiple challenges with the story from the Book of Mormon. According to the Smithsonian and other scientific sources:

GEOGRAPHY—None of the physical locations described in the Book of Mormon can be located on a map.

ARCHAEOLOGY—There have been no digs or findings of artifacts related to the Book of Mormon.

GENEAOLOGY—Native Americans possess no genetic markers found in people of Jewish ancestry and have closer bloodlines to Asian people groups.

TECHNOLOGY—Metallurgy and glassmaking described in the Book of Mormon were not present in the Americas historically.

LINGUISTICS—There are no evidences of Egyptian or Hebrew languages in Native American or Mesoamerican dialects.

TRANSLATIONS—The Book of Abraham was a Egyptian funerary scroll, not a Biblical document.

“THE LATTER DAY SAINTS”

EARLY MORMON BELIEVERS

- Joseph Smith founded the, “Church of Christ,” in 1830.
- Mormons moved westward from New York to Illinois as their numbers increased, mainly due to contention with non-Mormons.
- By the 1840s, Smith established many of the first temples and core elements of Mormonism.
- After battles against groups including the US military in the 1830s, Joseph Smith died in a prison riot in 1844 in Carthage, Illinois.



MORMONISM AFTER JOSEPH SMITH

- Leadership transitioned to Brigham Young, and some groups splintered off with subsequent leaders.
- By the 1850s, missionaries began spreading Mormonism to the world as their influence waned in the United States.
- In 1878, the US Supreme Court ruled against Mormon polygamy.
- Mormons settled in Utah and the territory was granted statehood in 1896 after Mormons gave up on polygamy.
- Doctrine continued to change and evolve over the 20th Century.



MORMONISM TODAY

ORGANIZATION & LEADERSHIP

- Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Led by a President who is called a, “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator,” elected from a Quorum of 70 men.
- Groups of local churches are gathered into, “wards,” which are then gathered into, “stakes,” led by men known as, “bishops.”
- Young Mormons go on two-year mission trips after high school to evangelize across the globe.



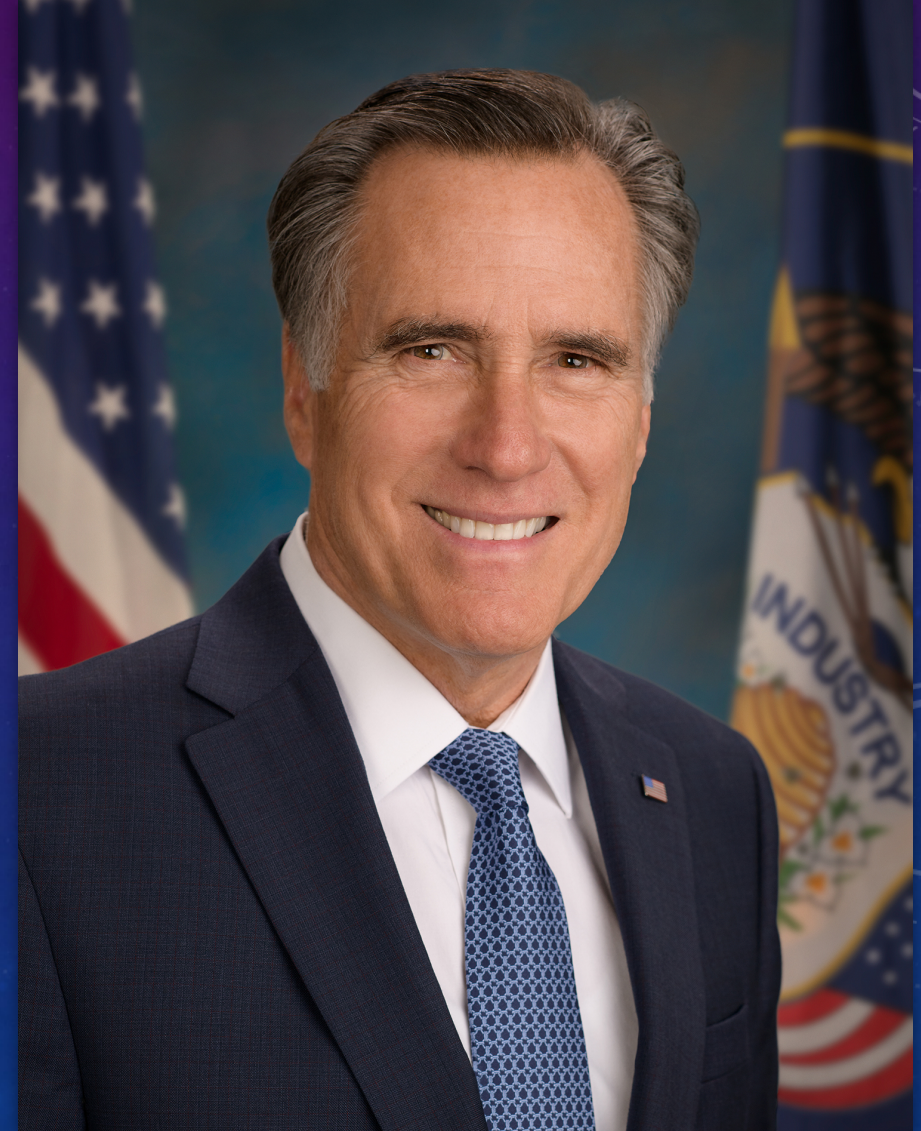
MORMONISM BY THE NUMBERS

- Approximately 17 million Mormons worldwide.
- About 3% of the State of Colorado are Mormon (~150,000 people), with 310 congregations locally.
- 315 Temples in use or development worldwide, with the closest ones in Littleton and Fort Collins, CO.
- A new report estimates the wealth of the LDS organization at \$236 billion in 2022, with a potential of \$1 trillion by 2044.



MORMON INFLUENCE

- Senator Mitt Romney from Utah, a lifelong Mormon, ran for President in 2012.
- Two BYU graduates founded Ancestry.com to foster genealogical research.
- Popular media like the, “Battlestar Galactica,” TV series and the, “Twilight,” anthology of books and movies.
- Popular celebrities like Amy Adams (DCHS graduate) and Glenn Beck are Mormons.
- Rebranding from, “Mormons,” to, “Latter Day Saints,” to, “Christians.”



RECOGNIZING MORMONS

- Pray with their arms folded across their bodies.
- Refer to God as, “Heavenly Father.”
- Refrain from drinking caffeine and alcohol.
- Tend to refer to fellow Mormons by name as, “Brother,” or, “Sister.”
- Refer to their mission assignment or wear nametags with, “Elder,” as their title.



DEFENDING YOUR FAITH

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

- Be faithful to study the Word and understand it (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- Have confidence that the Gospel has the ability to save souls (Romans 1:16).
- Trust that God will direct your words (Isaiah 55:11).



STRATEGIES & TACTICS

- **Define your terms.**
 - If referring to biblical terms, describe what you mean and don't assume common understanding.
- **Illustrate the differences.**
 - Show clearly how there are distinctions between Christianity and other faiths.
- **Agree to disagree.**
 - Point out the consequences of what each of you believe and trust the Gospel.

