

A Brief History

- Founded on the teachings & visions of Joseph Smith (1805-44)
- 10th Mormon President J. F. Smith:

Mormonism must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith.
- 1820: saw a vision of God and Jesus, told of the Christians:

that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight: that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. (Smith's Words)

Sharing Jesus with Mormons

A Brief History

- 1823: saw a vision from an angel (Moroni, son of Mormon)
- Told of hidden golden plates; later "translated" into the *Book of Mormon* (a "historical record" of OT Israelites in America)
- 1831 – 1844: claimed 135 direct revelations from God
- The presiding president/prophet has overriding authority

Were the revelations from God or not?

- Do they agree with the Bible, or do they deny, contradict and oppose it?

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The Authority of Scripture

2 Nephi 29:6 – *Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible.*

BUT

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

- Functionally, the Bible is seen as subordinate and fully subject to clarification and revision by the Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, Peral of Great Price.

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The Authority of Scripture

Might be asked to pray and ask God if Book of Mormon is true (told that James 1:5 says to do this; this is the verse Smith read.)

BUT

The Context is about trials and temptations.

AND

1 Thessalonians 5:21 – we are to **test** everything

AND

Galatians 1:6-9 – God has already condemned Mormonism

⁸Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. ⁹I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

Sharing Jesus with Mormons

Who is Jesus?

Claim: Book of Mormon is *Another Testament of Jesus Christ and witnesses of his divinity, his life, and his atonement*

Claim: Jesus was before the incarnation and is again a spirit.

Claim: Jesus is Jehovah (YHWH), and that the Father is Elohim (God Almighty)

BUT

Hear O Israel: the LORD [Jehovah] our God [Elohim], the LORD [Jehovah] is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Sharing Jesus with Mormons

Who is Jesus?

Mormon Position	Christian Position
A Created Being – born of God the Father and his wife ("Heavenly Mother")	Uncreated God
"Among the spirit children of Elohim, the firstborn was and is Jehovah, or Jesus Christ, to whom all others are juniors." (standard Mormon work: <i>Articles of Faith</i>)	Eternally the Son of God – John 1
A brother of Satan	³ The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. ⁴ This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names. (Hebrews 1:3-4)

Sharing Jesus with Mormons

Who is Jesus?

Mormon Position	Christian Position
Earned his own salvation (exalted by God)	As God, required no salvation, but came to save us .
Being just one of many spirit children, he too had to be saved	1 Corinthians 15:3b ... <i>Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.</i>
He came to earth to "work out his own salvation"	1 Peter 2:22-24 <i>He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.</i>
His atonement means original sin is undone, but individuals must do good works for their individual salvation	

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Who is Jesus?

Mormon Position	Christian Position
Common ; one of many gods, of relatively minor importance.	Unique ; the second person of the Trinity, of supreme importance throughout eternity and all creation.
Every exalted man will attain the same godhood Jesus now experiences	We will one day be <i>like</i> Jesus, but will not ourselves become gods – we remain created beings. <i>And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.</i> (2 Cor 3:18b)
Jesus is like all people and angels the offspring of the earth god's sexual union. (All people pre-exist as spirits before being born on earth)	We are created by God as whole persons We are children of God through faith and spiritual adoption when we put our faith in Jesus (see Galatians 3:26)

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Who is Jesus?

Mormon Position	Christian Position
The only "unique" thing about Jesus' nature is that his physical conception wasn't of a merely human father, but of Mary having sex with God.	<i>Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."</i> <i>The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.</i> (Luke 1:34-35)
God is a Man who used to walk on a world much like ours until he was exalted to godhood.	In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. (John 1:1-4)

Sharing Jesus with Mormons

How is one saved?

In Mormon theology General salvation – called "salvation by grace" - is for all humanity. It involves resurrection from the dead and immortality as spirits again. Say Jesus has not actually purchased salvation for anyone, but simply made it possible to earn individual salvation by good works.

BUT

Hebrews 9:27-28a - *And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgement, so also Christ died once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people.*

AND

Titus 3:5 ...*he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.*

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How is one saved?

Joseph Smith spoke of "mankind damned by 'faith alone' doctrine."

BUT

Salvation is based entirely on God's grace

Gal 2:16 - *Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.*

John 3:14-15 – *And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone **who believes in him** will have eternal life.*

Sharing Jesus with Mormons

Sharing the Good News

- **With Love!**
- By examining beliefs – theirs and our own
- By finding common ground
- By taking time
- By asking questions
- By pointing out false prophecies
- **By Prayer**

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