Comparing Christianity to Mormonism

"For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus … or you receive a different spirit … or a different gospel …" (2 Cor. 11:4)

What the Bible Says About Jesus:	What Mormonism Says About Jesus:
1. He is the virgin-born Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:34-5).	"Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nor was He begotten by the Holy Ghost. He is the Son of the Eternal Father!" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 7. Quoted in the *Ensign*, April 1997, p. 15) "God the Father became the literal father of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father." (*Gospel Principles*, p. 64) "Jesus is the only person who had our Heavenly Father as the father of his body." (Joseph F. Smith, *Family Home Evening Manual*, pp. 125-26) "Jesus Christ is the Son of Elohim both as spiritual and bodily offspring; that is to say, Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh." (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, pp. 466-67) "Let it not be forgotten, that He is essentially greater than any and all others, by reason (1) of His seniority as the oldest or first born; (2) of His unique status in the flesh as the offspring of a mortal mother and of an immortal, or resurrected and glorified, Father …" (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, p. 426).
[Satan is a created – and fallen – angel].	"Long before you were born a program was developed by your creators…. The principal personalities in this great drama were a Father Elohim, perfect in wisdom, judgment, and person, and two sons, Lucifer and Jehovah." (Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp. 32-33)

What the Bible Says About Jesus:	What Mormonism Says About Jesus:
	"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 … this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind." (Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, p. 15) "Both the scriptures and the prophets affirm that Jesus Christ and Lucifer are indeed offspring of our Heavenly Father and, therefore, spirit brothers…. Both Jesus and Lucifer were strong leaders with great knowledge and influence. But as the First-born of the Father, Jesus was Lucifer's older brother." (Jess L. Christensen, *A Sure Foundation: Answers to Difficult Gospel Questions*, pp. 223-24. This teaching also appears in other Mormon publications.)
2. Jesus did not marry.	"Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana – We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, to be brought into relation whereby he could see his seed." (Orson Hyde, apostle, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 82) "From the passage in the forty-fifth Psalm, it will be seen that the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, was a Polygamist…. the Messiah chose to take upon himself his seed; and by marrying many honorable wives himself, show to all future generations that he approbated the plurality of Wives under the Christian dispensation, as well as under the dispensations in which His Polygamist ancestors lived." (Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 172)
3. Jesus is the foundation of the true church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 4:11-12; Col. 1:18).	Joseph Smith: "I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him, but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, pp. 408-9)

What the Bible Says About Jesus:	What Mormonism Says About Jesus:
4. Jesus is the judge of all (John 5:22).	"No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith … Every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, Junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are." (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses,* vol. 7, p. 289)
5. Jesus is the one who resurrects all (John 5:28-29).	Joseph Smith will receive the keys of the resurrection. "If we ask who will stand at the head of the resurrection in this last dispensation, the answer is – Joseph Smith, Junior, the Prophet of God. He is the man who will be resurrected and receive the keys of the resurrection, and he will seal this authority upon others, and they will hunt up their friends and resurrect them." (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young,* p. 116).
6. Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the Creator, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Holy Spirit (John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-20; Phil 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-13).	A "council of the Gods" created the world. "In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it … In all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods." (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church,* Vol. 6, pp. 308, 474). "He [Jesus] is the Firstborn of the Father. By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state…. Inasmuch, however, as Christ attained Godhood while yet in pre-existence, he too stood as a God to the other spirits." (Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 129, 323)

What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit:	What Mormonism Says About the Holy Spirit:
1. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the triune Godhead (Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19-20).	Joseph Smith taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit "constitute three distinct personages and three Gods." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* p. 370)
2. The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4).	The Father has a body of flesh and bones. So does the Son. But the Holy Ghost is "a personage of spirit." (*Doctrine and Covenants 130:22*)

What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit:	**What Mormonism Says About the Holy Spirit:**
3. The Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost are two Biblical names for the same person.	"The Holy Ghost … is a personage distinct from the Holy Spirit. As a personage, the Holy Ghost cannot any more than the Father and the Son be everywhere present in person." (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations,* p. 76).
4. The Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost is God (Acts 5:3-4).	"The Holy Ghost is yet a spiritual body and waiting to take to himself a body as the Saviour did or as the gods before them took bodies." (Joseph Smith, April 6, 1843; see *Discourses on the Holy Ghost* compiled by N.B. Lundwall, p. 73)

What the Bible Says About the Gospel of Jesus Christ:	**What Mormonism Says About the Gospel of Jesus Christ:**
1. Christ's death at Calvary paid our sin debt and purchased our salvation so that everlasting life is received by grace through faith in the Person and work of Jesus (John 3:16, 5:24; Rom. 4:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).	Jesus' death, burial and resurrection made it possible for mankind to be resurrected, but "men will be punished for their own sins." (*Article of Faith #2* by Joseph Smith). Through the atonement of Christ "all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel." (*Article of Faith #3* by Joseph Smith) "There is *no salvation* outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." (Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine,* p. 670) "Baptism … is for the remission of sins … (and) is the gate to the celestial kingdom of heaven." (Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine,* p. 70) There is "no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith … No man can eject that testimony without accepting most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* Vol. 1, p. 188)

What the Bible Says About the Gospel of Jesus Christ:	**What Mormonism Says About the Gospel of Jesus Christ:**
	A summary of Mormon teaching on grace and works: • The grace of God provides for resurrection from the dead • Works are necessary for a person to achieve exaltation, or goodhood • Salvation by grace alone is a pernicious doctrine • Perfection is an achievable goal (Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson, *Mormonism 101*, p. 169)
2. The Bible teaches that at death, man's eternal destiny is fixed in one of two places: heaven or hell (Luke 16:19-31).	Virtually all men are saved in "General Salvation … meaning resurrection." (*Contributions of Joseph Smith* by Stephen L. Richards, p. 5) Then, based on works, all men will spend eternity in one of three levels of heaven – telestial, terrestrial or celestial. A few "sons of perdition" will not be saved/resurrected. More specifically, Mormonism teaches that a person is destined for one of six places after death: • Outer darkness – reserved for Satan and his demons and the extremely wicked, including apostate Mormons • Telestial kingdom – the lowest of the three heavens; the wicked will spend eternity here • Terrestrial kingdom – the second of the three heavens; honorable people and "lukewarm" Mormons will live here • Celestial kingdom – the highest of the three heavens consisting of three separate levels; the top level is where Mormons hope to be exalted
3. All men are sinners by nature and by volition (Rom. 3:23, 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).	There is no such thing as original sin. All men are gods in embryo. "God and man are of the same race, differing only in their degrees of advancement." (Apostle John Widtsoe, *Rational Theology*, p. 61)
4. There is no second chance for salvation after death (Heb. 9:27).	Mormons may be baptized on behalf of the dead for their salvation. "If a man cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism, then the dead must be baptized." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. II, p. 141)

What the Bible Says About the Gospel of Jesus Christ:	**What Mormonism Says About the Gospel of Jesus Christ:**
5. Once a person is justified, his or her salvation is eternally secure, based on the finished work of Christ at Calvary and the faithfulness of God (John 5:24, 10:27-30; Rom. 4:21, 8:28-39; Heb. 7:25, 10:14; 1 Peter 1:1-5).	Believers must do works to earn a level of heaven and risk losing their position in that heaven if they are not faithful in service. For example, failure to marry in an LDS church will "damn" persons so that their eternal progression will be stopped short of godhood. (See *Doctrine and Covenants 132:16-20*)
6. Each individual is a uniquely created person whose beginning came at the moment of conception; after death, that person retains his or her personhood and spends eternity in heaven or hell.	Each individual has four stages of life (eternal progression): 1. Eternally existing intelligence. 2. Pre-mortal spirit born by procreation of God and one of his wives. 3. Mortal probation (present life on earth). 4. Post-mortal status that depends on works done in this life. Eternity is spent in one of three heavens: telestial (almost everyone makes it at least this far); terrestrial (good and religious folk make it here); and celestial (only Mormons who have fulfilled the proper requirements make it into one of this heaven's three levels).

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