

LDS History Speaks for Itself

It's all too obvious, from early LDS records, that Joseph Smith lured folks to his church by using biblical language familiar to them. In less than a decade, however, he began to teach *another* god...

We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea... he was once a man like us... (History of the Church, 6:305, April, 1844)

... a god his early followers had not known before. This new teaching opened the door to today's very different LDS theology, including the idea that men can become Gods. Many left the Mormon Church, heeding God's warning:

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for *Jehovah* your *Elohim* proveth you, to know whether ye love *Jehovah* your *Elohim* with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after *Jehovah* your *Elohim*, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from *Jehovah* your *Elohim*... (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

But many others continued to follow, no doubt being assured by the prophet that God will not hold them responsible, should he be found in error.⁹ They either ignored, or were not aware of, the fate God promises those who are led by false prophets:

"For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." (Isaiah 9:13-16)

Whom will you follow; the prophet who causes you to err and be destroyed; or God who is always faithful?

⁹ Mormon leadership has consistently taught that the Lord will never allow a prophet to lead people astray, "...and if he (the prophet) ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it." (Pres. Heber J. Grant to Marion G. Romney, Conference Report, Oct., 1960, p. 78)

The Truth Will Set You Free

The truth is that, while the LDS Church routinely accuses Christianity of tampering with the Bible and its doctrine (typically based on supposition and innuendo, not real evidence), there is abundant proof that Mormon scripture and doctrine have been seriously altered from the original.

The truth is, these changes in doctrine have diverted the sincere devotion of Mormons from worshipping the only true God, to striving to become Gods themselves. But God told us, long ago, that it will never happen:

... before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (Isaiah 43:10)

The truth is, the Bible warns us against following those who teach a different gospel, a different Christ or another God:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)

See also, 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 and Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (quoted previously).

The truth is, God is waiting to set you free from earthly mediators and give you **Eternal Life**; and there is only one stipulation — that you trust Jesus Christ:

We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us **eternal life**, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have **eternal life**. (1 John 5:9-13)

For more help understanding the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ, contact:



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Jehovah & Elohim
two Gods
or one?

What did Joseph Smith teach and later change?

Early Mormon Teachings:

From 1830 to 1876 all of the scriptures¹ of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon/LDS) taught that there was only one God, who had always been God, from eternity past. In other words, God was never anything else but God. During this period, the LDS leadership apparently understood that *Jehovah* was the name of God the Father and that *Elohim* was the generic term for God (gods). Notice the usage of the two terms in the following quotes from early Mormon publications:

We believe in God the Father, who is the great Jehovah and head of all things, and that Christ is the Son of God, co eternal [sic] with the Father... (E. [Erastus] Snow and B. Winchester, Nov. 15, 1841, *Times and Seasons*³, Vol. 3, p. 578)

The great Eloheim² Jehovah has been pleased once more to speak from the heavens: and also to commune with man upon the earth, by means of open visions, and by the ministration of HOLY MESSENGERS. By this means the great and eternal High Priesthood, after the Order of his Son, even the Apostleship, has been restored; or, returned to the earth. (*Proclamation of the Twelve*, April 6, 1845, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 1:253, CD-Rom Disc, *LDS Historical Library*, second edition, Infobase)

...let us plead the justice of our cause; trusting in the arm of Jehovah, the Eloheim, who sits enthroned in the heavens... (Joseph Smith, Aug. 14, 1842, *History of the Church*, 5:94)

Thou eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Jehovah-God-Thou Elohim, that sittest, as saith the Psalmist, 'enthroned in heaven,' look down upon thy servant Joseph Smith... (Joseph Smith, Dec., 1835, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 2:162)

But to secure his blessings the Lord requires the strict obedience of His people. This is our duty. We obey the Lord, Him who is called Jehovah, the Great I AM, I am a man of war, Eloheim, etc. We are under many obligations to obey him. (Brigham Young, November 17, 1867, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:99)

Modern Mormon Teachings:

It appears that Joseph Smith began to pave the way for today's Mormon definitions of *Jehovah* and *Elohim* when, in March 1839, he allegedly received a revelation speaking of:

... a time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many Gods, they shall be manifest. (*Doctrine & Covenants* 121:28)

Then at the April, 1844 General Conference, Joseph introduced a radically different doctrine of God when he declared:

We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God... and that he was once a man like us; yea that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did... (*History of the Church*, 6:305; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345)

This new doctrine, called Eternal Progression, teaches that God was once a man like us. By perfectly following all the laws and ordinances of the LDS gospel⁴, he became a God. Following the example of his father, Jesus did likewise, becoming *another* God. It is taught that this process has taken place from eternity past and that we too can become Gods, in the same sense that they did⁵.

By June, 1844, Joseph was claiming that he and the elders of the church had always (since 1829) taught the plurality of Gods⁶, in spite of the 1839 revelation, above, indicating that that knowledge was yet to come.

There was evidently a period of confusion over the two names, *Jehovah*⁷ and *Elohim*, until 1916, when the LDS leadership published a doctrinal exposition declaring that:

...Jesus Christ, whom we also know as Jehovah, was the executive of the Father, Elohim... (*The Articles of Faith*, by James E. Talmage, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976 edition, Appendix 2, pp. 465, 467, 472-473)

Today, the LDS Church continues to teach that *Elohim* is the name-title of God the Father and that *Jehovah* is the name of his Son, the pre-mortal Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament⁸, *another* God.

Biblical Teachings:

Fortunately, the Bible is abundantly clear on the meaning of *Elohim* and *Yahweh* (*Jehovah*). These two Hebrew words are not generally used in English translations of the Bible, but if we consult *Strong's Concordance*, which has every word of the King James Version keyed to a Hebrew dictionary, we see that the Hebrew word *Elohim* is translated *God* and the Hebrew word *Yahweh* (*Jehovah*) is translated *the LORD*. With this in mind, let's read a few passages from the Bible, inserting the Hebrew equivalents where needed for clarity:

But *Jehovah* is the true *Elohim*. (Jeremiah 10:10)

I am *Jehovah*, and there is none else, there is no *Elohim* beside me. (Isaiah 45:5)

I am *Jehovah*, thy *Elohim*... Thou shalt have no other *elohim* before me. (Exodus 20:2-3)

These are not isolated passages. The Old Testament contains more than 800 passages using the expression "the LORD our God (*Jehovah our elohim*)" or "the LORD your God (*Jehovah your elohim*)", demonstrating overwhelmingly that *Jehovah* and *Elohim* are not the names of two separate Gods, but the Hebrew name and title of one and the same God.

We see also that, according to the Old Testament, *Jehovah* is the name of God the Father:

We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and *the LORD* (*Jehovah*) has laid on *him* (*Jesus*) the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

Clearly, *Jehovah* in this verse, is the Father because God the Father is the one who laid all our iniquity on *him* (*Jesus*).

4 *Gospel Principles*, 1995, Chapter 47; *Search These Commandments, Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide*, 1984, pp. 152-153.

5 *Ibid*.

6 *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 370.

7 *Sunstone*, Vol. 9, #2, Autumn 1984.

8 *Bible Dictionary* in the LDS Edition of *The Holy Bible*, 1979, under heading of *God*; *Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, p. 224, under heading of *Elohim*.

1 *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and The Holy Bible. The Pearl of Great Price* had not yet been canonized.

2 Alternate spelling for Elohim

3 "a periodical, through the medium of which, (the Saints) can communicate unto all men, the principles of life and salvation." (*Times and Seasons*, Vol.3, p. 577)