

What is the Mormon Church. . . . really?

Study on the Trinity: the Mormon view in contrast to the Biblical Christian view— Part THREE



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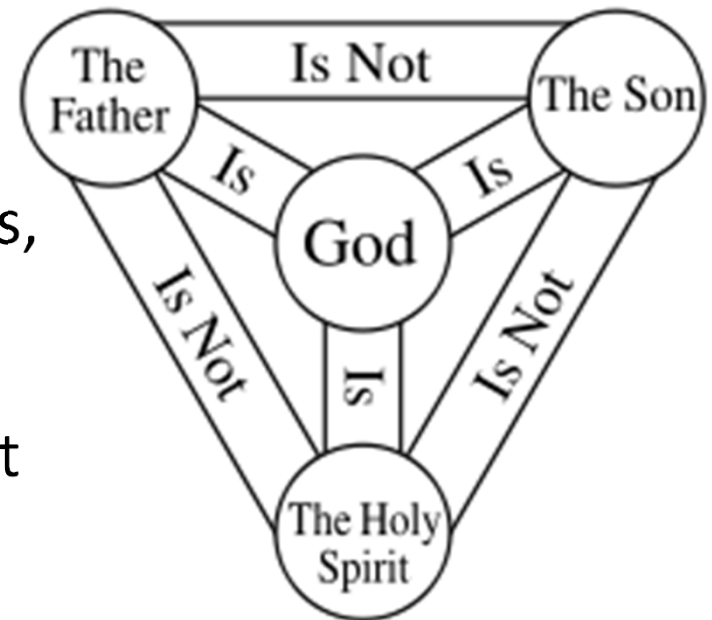
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Review and background

- The Trinity is one of the KEY differences between Christianity, cults, and other religions: Mormons, Jehovah Witness, Islam and many others
- The same WORDS may be used, but they have COMPLETELY different meanings in the different religions.
- We have discovered, based the Bible:
 - All Members of the Trinity are God
 - All Members of the Trinity are Persons
- This week: How they relate to each other, clarification of Jesus



Mormon position

- I will preach on the **plurality of Gods**. . . . I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute **three distinct personages and three Gods**. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo and behold! we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural; and who can contradict it?
 - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 1843–44, p. 370-373:
- "The Father is a glorified, perfected, resurrected, **exalted man** who worked out his salvation by obedience to the same laws he has given to us so that we may do the same"
 - LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie taught:
- **"As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be"**
 - LDS Apostle James E. Talmage

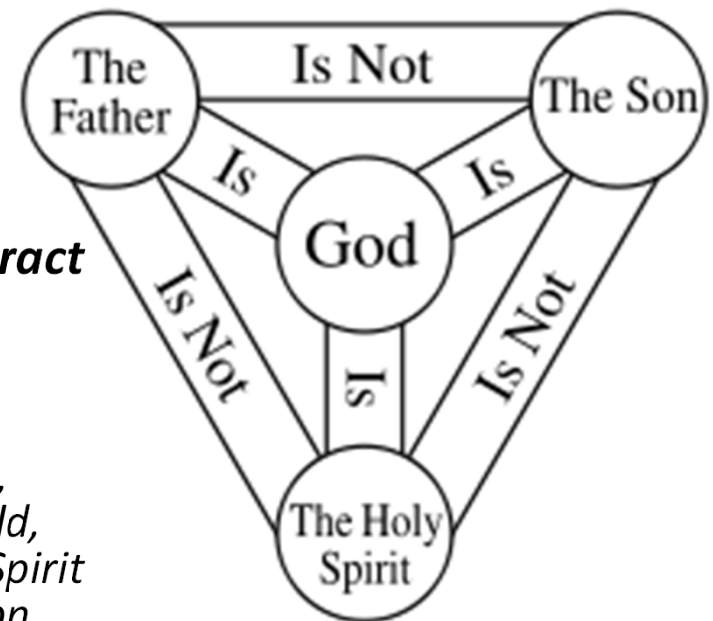


Mormon view of the Holy Spirit

- A distinction between the Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit, **"The Holy Ghost, sometimes called the comforter, is the third member of the Godhead, and is a personage distinct from the Holy Spirit. As a personage, the Holy Ghost cannot any more than the Father and Son be everywhere present in person"** (*E.& R.*, p. 76).
- **The Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God. It is a universe-filling medium or influence"** (*E.& R.*, p. 62).. . . .**"a divine substance or fluid, called the Holy Spirit"** (*Key to Theology*, p. 29). Then he declared, **"The purest, most refined and subtle of all substances, and the one least understood, or even recognized, by the less informed among mankind, is that substance called the Holy Spirit"** (*Ibid.*, p. 39).
- From the Mormon Bible dictionary: Holy Ghost. The third member of the Godhead and, as the name implies, a personage of Spirit, not possessing a body of flesh and bones (D&C 130:21–22). The Holy Ghost has been manifest in every dispensation of the gospel since the beginning, being first made known to Adam (1 Ne. 10:17–22; Moses 6:51–68). . . . **The gift can come only after proper and authorized baptism, and is conferred by the laying on of hands**, as in Acts 8:12–25 and Moroni 2:1–3. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the right to have, whenever one is worthy, the companionship of the Holy Ghost.
- ALL Mormon views COMPLETELY FALSE, NON-BIBLICAL, NOT TRUE

Biblical view of the Trinity

- One God, Three persons
- All members of the Trinity are God
- All Members of the Trinity are Persons
- In their personhood *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct from each other and interact with each other*)
- At the baptism of Jesus we witness one of the clearest pictures of the Trinity.
 - Matthew 3:16–17 says, “When Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my [Father] beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”
- All three persons of the Trinity are present, and each one is doing something different: the Father is speaking, and the Son is being anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the Messiah and missionary.



- Driscoll, Mark; Breshears, Gerry (2010-03-19). Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe

History of the church and understanding the Trinity

- Not easy because:
 - New Jewish Christians—one GOD
 - New pagan Christians—many gods
- How exactly is Jesus God?
- How do the Three persons of the Trinity relate to each other?
- Took hundreds of years for the church to clarify
- Partly because of early persecution
- Partly because of influence of non-biblical philosophy
- Bible must always be primary

Personal application

- Not knowing, growing in knowledge not the same as willfully accepting or promoting falsehood
- Definitions:
 - **Heretic:** one who restricts “belief to certain points of Christ's doctrine selected and fashioned at pleasure” usually in direct disregard of the accepted teachings of the Church
 - *A heretic is a man who sees with his own eyes.*
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing
 - **Apostate:** is one who abandons wholly the faith of Christ either by embracing Judaism, Islamism, Paganism, or simply by falling into naturalism and complete neglect of religion; the heretic sometimes retains faith in Christ.
 - **Cult:** a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious;
 - Orthodox: Adhering to the Christian faith as expressed in the early Christian ecumenical creeds. Therefore: Mormonism is a cult.
- If you don't understand—study, pray for wisdom
- Worthy of our time, focus, discussion, Bible 1st, other sources 2nd
- For your growth in humility, for our comfort, and protection

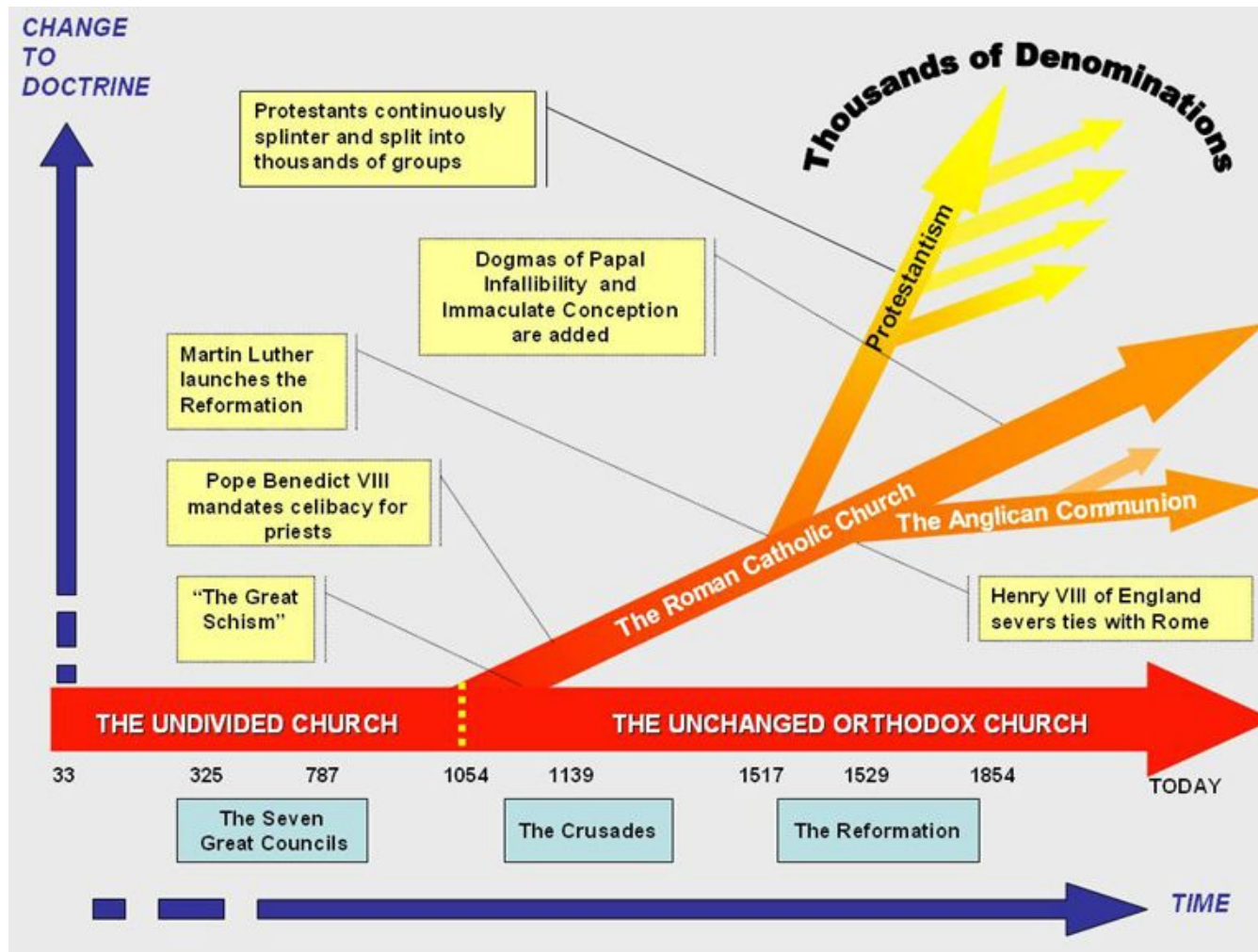
Though difficult essential

- Because without an understanding that Jesus was truly God, he could not be Savior
- Mormon inconsistency and confusion
 - How can the Spirit brother of Lucifer achieve salvation by sweating blood?
- Key from the earliest days of the church



- **I**esous **C**hristos **T**heou **Y**ios **S**oter.
- Jesus Christ God's Son Savior
- How then did the Church come to understand it

Church history



All decisions made concerning the Trinity in early days of undivided church

One of the first: Modalism

- Modalism teaches that God is successively Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; he is not simultaneously Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Modalism is a heresy that does not view the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three particular persons in relation but merely as three modes or manifestations of the one divine person of God. God revealed himself successively in salvation history, first as Father (creator and lawgiver), then as Son (redeemer), and finally as Spirit (sustainer and giver of grace). For a modalist, the God of the Old Testament is the Father. In the incarnation, God was manifested in Jesus. Then, after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, God came in the mode of the Holy Spirit.
- ***However, the baptism of Jesus and Jesus' prayer in the garden of Gethsemane reveal clearly that the three persons converse with each other simultaneously.***
 - Driscoll, Mark; Breshears, Gerry (2010-03-19). Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe (RE: Lit) (p. 31). Good News Publishers/Crossway Books. Kindle Edition.
- Importantly, as a side note, the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople did not *invent* the doctrine of the Trinity; rather, they defended and articulated what orthodox Christians had always believed, from the time of the apostles. It is critical to remember that the doctrine of **the Trinity is established in Scripture**, not church history. The early councils merely *affirmed* the biblical teaching in the face of heretical attack.
 - http://thecripplegate.com/modalism_oneness_and_td_jakes/

Further clarification of Jesus Christ

Council	Issue	Bad Guy	Good Guy	Outcome
Nicea 325 AD	Eternal Deity of Christ	Arius Christ is a Created Being	Athanasius Christ is God	Eternal Deity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed
Costantinople 381 AD	Person of Christ	Apollinarius Christ is Divine Logos but not human spirit	Gregory of Nestansius	Complete Humanity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed Affirmed
Ephesus 431 AD	Person of Christ	Nestorius Against the Deity of Christ	Cyril of Alexandria	Complete Deity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed Affirmed
Chalcedon 451 AD	Person of Christ	Eutyches Christ is a "tertium quid" A third unique nature	Flavian of Constantinople and Leo of Rome	Two Natures of Christ Affirmed (Human Nature and Divine Nature)

For more information: MAJOR COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH at:
<http://www.dailycatholic.org/history/councils.htm>

Nicene Creed ties it all together

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.