

The Jesus of Christianity Compared to the Jesus of Mormonism

By David Bennett June 2010

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. Matthew 7:15

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. Romans 16:17-18

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. Colossians 2:8

The Jesus of Christianity is *not* the same as the Jesus of Mormonism

Let me state right off that the Jesus of Christianity is different than the Jesus of Mormonism despite the slick marketing being done that calls the Book of Mormon (BoM) “*Another Testament of Jesus Christ*”. The truth is Mormonism teaches a different God, a different Jesus, and a different Christianity. Below I will highlight *some* of the differences between the Jesus of Christianity and the Jesus of the Latter Day Saints (LDS).

That the God and Jesus of Christianity are not the same as the God and Jesus of Mormonism is not merely my opinion but comes from prominent Mormons and is borne out upon examination.

At the 147th General Conference, General Authority Bernard Brockbank (a Mormon) stated:

“the Christ followed by the Mormons is not the Christ followed by traditional Christianity. It is true that many of the Christian Churches worship a *different* Jesus Christ than is worshiped by the Mormons” *The Ensign*, May, 1977 pg.26.

In 1998 LDS President Hinckley spoke of claims outside the LDS church that ‘Mormons do not believe in the historical Christ’ and whether or not he regarded the Jesus of Christianity as the same Jesus of Mormonism:

“No, I don’t. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak. For the Christ of whom I speak has been revealed in the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times*. He, together with his Father, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the year 1820 and when Joseph left the grove that day, he knew more about the nature of God than all the learned ministers of the gospel of the ages.”

Church News, June 20, 1998.

* the term "*Dispensation of the Fullness of Times*" is used by the Mormon Church to denote "the last days" that Joseph Smith was said to have ushered in.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a **different gospel-- which is really no gospel at all**. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the*

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one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! 1 Galatians 1:6-9

Among its many faults, not one single major LDS doctrine can be found in the BoM. In fact the BoM is contradictory to other Mormon books that do contain doctrine. Yet the BoM is the book they want you to read, not their books on doctrine.

Changes in the BoM

"I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was *the most correct of any book on earth*, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of Mormonism, *History of the Church*, Volume 4, page 461.

Mormonism teaches that the BoM is the *most correct book* ever written. Why then don't Mormons read the BoM written in 1830? Many changes have been made to the BoM over the years. A comparison of the first edition of the Book of Mormon with a current edition shows nearly 4,000 changes. Many of the changes seem minor unless you consider the BoM to be *the most correct of any book on earth*. In many cases the original *thought* was changed and the changes are major departures from the original text.

For example, in the first edition of the BoM, what is now 1 Nephi 11:32 (Chapter 3, page 26 of the original Book of Mormon), shows that the original manuscript *and* the first edition copies are identical. Since the handwritten copy and the first printed copies match, one cannot dismiss them as "printer's errors." Subsequent *changes were introduced by the LDS Church* and are significantly different from the handwritten manuscript and the early printed copies.

A few changes:

- The original states that Joseph Smith *wrote* the BoM and later it was changed to say he *translated* the BoM.
- *Benjamin* changed to *Mosiah* in both Mosiah 21:28 and Ether 4:1.
- *Directors* changed to *interpreters* - Alma 37:21, 24.
- *White* changed to *pure* (pertains to change in skin color) - 2 Nephi 30:6.
- *Mother of God* changed to *Mother of the Son of God*. - 1 Nephi 11:18.
- *The Eternal Father* changed to *Son of the Eternal Father* - 1 Nephi 11:21, 32, 13:40.
- *The everlasting God* changed to *Son of the everlasting God* - 1 Nephi 11:32.
- *Preparator* (in 1830 edition) changed to *foundation* (at least in the 1908, 1920, 1948, 1961 editions, probably others) *and then back to Preparator* (1981 edition). - 1 Nephi 15:35.

Alma 41:8 claims "*Now, the decrees of God are unalterable...*" And still the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints managed to introduce change after change for over 150 years.

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Joseph Smith and the King James Bible

Joseph Smith wrote the BoM about 250 years after the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible was translated. Joseph Smith plagiarized much of the King James Bible, both the style and stories. He even copied errors and words added for clarification in the KJV translations:

There are 17 full chapters from the Book of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon in Mosiah. In a close comparison of chapter 53 of Isaiah and the 14th chapter of Mosiah one will find that all the italicized words in Isaiah are word for word copied in Mosiah. Those italicized words were added by the King James translators in 1611 for clarification and easier reading in English. How does the LDS Church explain their presence if Joseph Smith didn't copy out of the Bible? (Source: <http://www.hismin.com/questions.html>)

I have been reading the BoM and what jumps out at me is it is *just plain bad King James English*, very bad. It is clear that Joseph Smith was trying to write in the *style* of King James English and went too far.

One has to wonder why Joseph Smith even tried to write in the style of the King James English. The “bad King James English” shows the BoM reflects the idioms of the English language in the early 1600s found in the KJV of the Bible and not, as one would expect, the Near Eastern idioms of the ancient language it purports to translate. A translation of ancient material would include the idioms of the time period being translated or of the time period of the translation (the 1830s) but not the idioms of a period in between the original and the translation. When Joseph Smith wrote the BoM the language of the KJV was already archaic. Why wasn't the BoM translated into the language of the 1830s United States?

The great-nephew of Joseph Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. wrote:

"Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground.... The doctrines of false teachers will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurement, the scriptures." *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, page 188.

As you'll read below Mormonism does not “stand the test.”

‘A burning in your bosom’

Mormons tell me that I should read the BoM *and then* pray to see if I get ‘*a burning in your bosom*’ as God reveals it's truthfulness to me. They tell me if I pray about it and “*ask with a sincere heart*” I will receive confirmation that it is true. If no positive confirmation comes, then it must be that I was not sincere – and I must keep praying until I receive an answer. My guess is a Hindu or a Muslim could claim they had a warm fuzzy feeling too when they prayed about their sacred texts. Have Mormons read the Christian *Bible*? Have they read the writings of Buddha or Confucius, the Muslim *Qur'an*, the Hindu *Vedas* or *Bhagavad Gita* and sincerely prayed about them? *A burning* alone proves nothing. Is it consistent? Is it factually correct? One must also consider archeology and historical accounts (both friendly and unfriendly). The Christian Bible passes the test on those accounts, the BoM does not.

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Witnesses

Several Mormons claimed to have *actually seen* the Golden Plates from which Joseph Smith translated the BoM. They all claimed to have seen piles and stacks of these plates.

- “Wagon loads of plates” inside the Hill Cumorah said David Whitmer (Preston Nibley, *The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon*, pp 68-69.)
- Heber C. Kimball, Oliver Cowdery, and Joseph Sr. (*Journal of Discourses* [JoD] 4:105.)
- Brigham Young (JoD 19:38)
- Similar stories were repeated by Wilford Woodruff (4th President of the Church), Lucy Smith (Joseph Smith’s mother), William Phelps, and others.

The truth of the matter is the BoM witnesses later admitted they *only saw these things in visions*, not in reality. To make matters worse all the BoM witnesses (excepting Joseph Smith’s brothers and his father) later left the Mormon Church and joined other religions or started their own.

- When Martin Harris was asked about this, he said, “I never saw the golden plates, only in a visionary or entranced state...” (*Early Mormon Documents*, 2:346-47, quoted from “*Insider’s View of Mormon Origin*”, p. 198.)
- When questioned by another person whether he (Martin Harris) saw the plates and engravings on them with his bodily eyes, he said, “I did not see them as I do that pencil case, yet I saw them with the eye of faith.” (*Early Mormon Documents*, 2:270.)
- David Whitmer also agreed that they did not handle the plates physically, only as in vision. More of this in Preston Nibley’s book, “*Witnesses of the Book of Mormon*”.
- In the *History of the Church* (vol. 1:52-55) it states that to see the plates the witnesses had to pray in order to see the visions of the plates.

Divisions in Christianity and Mormonism

The late Mormon "apostle" Bruce McConkie said in a satellite transmission to Mormons worldwide:

"The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity -- manuscripts which passed through the hands of uninspired men who changed many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. Deletions were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been lost. As a consequence, those who rely upon it alone stumble and are confused and divide themselves among churches, all based on this or that interpretation of the Bible."
Source: *Ensign*, December 1985, page 55.

Mormonism teaches that because the BoM is so perfect and clear Mormonism does not have the divisions that traditional Christianity has.

It is to be expected that when the angel restores the gospel it will be restored in fullness and in the most perfect simplicity and plainness so that every point of the doctrine of Christ shall be *clearly revealed and expressed in such language that no two persons could understand it differently*...nothing else can be an infallible standard of the Christian religion; nothing else can reclaim them from divisions and strifes; nothing else

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will give certainty and stability so necessary to the happiness and salvation of man; and nothing else could be expected in the revelation of the gospel by an angel. *Such a revelation is the Book of Mormon*; the most infallible certainty characterizes every ordinance and every doctrinal point revealed in that book. ***In it there is no ambiguity no room for controversy no doctrine so imperfectly expressed that two persons would draw two different conclusions therefrom...*** (Orson Pratt's Works, Vol 2, "*Important Works in Mormon History*", Grandin Book Co, 1990, p. 83; This can also be found in *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, Apostle Orson Pratt, 1851, No. 6, page 83)

Did Pratt forget about Mormonism's many divisions? The divisions in the Mormon church started just a few years after it was founded. The most well known division being the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now known as Community of Christ). The RLDS was founded in the spring of 1844 by leaders dissenting from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The RLDS was first headed by Joseph Smith III, the eldest surviving son of Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of the Latter Day Saint movement.

In 2001, the RLDS/Community of Christ President W. Grant McMurray said of problems with the BoM, "*The proper use of the Book of Mormon as sacred scripture has been under wide discussion in the 1970s and beyond, in part because of long-standing questions about its historicity and in part because of perceived theological inadequacies, including matters of race and ethnicity.*"

Archaeology

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has spent tens of millions of dollars in archeological searches in North, Central, and South America and has not found anything, no evidence of the people or large cities they claim existed.

Contrast that to Biblical archaeology which has found much and every year finds more evidence. Cities that have not existed for thousands of years but mentioned in the Bible have been located and their inhabitants identified and their history verified.

Ancient People

The BoM claims to be a history of the ancient peoples living in Central America. Mormons claim that in 1830 no one knew of the existence of the great cities and ancient civilizations which once inhabited Central America and that archaeologists and other researchers after 1830 confirmed that ancient civilizations and cities, similar to those described in the BoM, did not exist. Based on these type of statements Mormons believe the BoM is accurate and must have been translated as Joseph Smith claimed.

Many books existed prior to the BoM from which Joseph Smith could have learned about ancient cultures in Central and South America: *History of America*, Herrera, 1725; *The Hope of Israel*, Manasseh ben Israel 1649-1656; *History of Mexico*, Clavigero (2 Vols.), 1st English edition in 1787, translated by Charlie; Cullen; *History of the American Indians*, James Adair, 1775; *The American Geography*, Jedidiah Morse, 1789; *European Settlements in America*, Burks, 1808; *Spanish Colonies*, Walton, 1810; *Researches in Mexico*, A. De Humboldt, translated into English by H. M. Williams, 1814; *Researches on America*, James H. McCullah, 1817; *Spanish America*,

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R. H. Bonnycastle, 1818; *Bullock's Mexico*, 1824; *Archaeologia Americana*, 1820; *A View of S. America and Mexico*, Niles, 1826.

The books by Mannasseh ben Israel in 1656 & James Adair in 1775 both advanced the theory that the American Indians were descendants of the Israelites; therefore, Joseph Smith did not have a new revelation regarding this incorrect theory.

Ancient Languages

According to the LDS movement the BoM was originally written in a language he claimed to be *Reformed Egyptian*. The only problem is there is no such thing as reformed Egyptian.

...standard language reference works contain no reference to "reformed Egyptian". No non-Mormon scholars acknowledge the existence of either a "reformed Egyptian" language or a "reformed Egyptian" orthography as it has been described in Mormon belief. For instance, in 1966, John A. Wilson, professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago, wrote, "From time to time there are allegations that picture writing has been found in America... In no case has a professional Egyptologist been able to recognize these characters as Egyptian hieroglyphs. From our standpoint there is no such language as 'reformed Egyptian'." Klaus Baer, another Egyptologist at the University of Chicago, called the characters of the "Caractors" document nothing but "doodlings". An early twentieth century scholar said that the "Carators" document looked more like "deformed English." ...During the early 1980s, forger Mark Hofmann sold alleged Mormon materials to Mormon investors and the LDS Church, including a sample of reformed Egyptian characters probably copied from the Caractors Transcript in a manner intended to make them more closely agree with the description given by Anthon.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_Egyptian

Racism

- The Book of Mormon, *prior to the 1981 change*, says that American Indians will turn white when they convert to Mormonism (2 Nephi 30:6).
- "...The negro is not equal with other races..." *Mormon Doctrine*, 527-28, 1966 **now changed** in the current edition.
- In 2 Nephi 30:6 both the original printer's manuscript and the 1830 edition state believers "...shall be a white and a delightsome people." "**White**" has since been changed to "**pure**" fairly recently.
- The prophet Brigham Young said blacks would never hold priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (This "*unchangeable*" dictate of the Prophet was rescinded over a century later.)
- "But let them apostatize and they will become gray-haired and black just like the Devil." Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, P. 332.
- "There is a reason why one man is born black...while another is born white with great advantages." Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrine of Salvation*, 1:61, 65-66.
- In 1958, Bruce McConkie, apostle of the Mormon council of 12, said, "We know the circumstances under which the posterity of Cain (and later of Ham) were cursed with what we call Negroid racial characteristics." (Bruce McConkie, *Apostle of the Mormon council of 12*, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1958, p. 554)

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A Few Differences between Mormonism and Christianity:

In the beginning:

- Christianity: God created *all things* in six days. All creatures, including man, were created after their own kinds.
- Mormonism: Each man had a pre-earth life and we existed as God's "spirit children."
- Christianity: The Judeo-Christian Bible deals with the beginning of the universe. Genesis 1:1 tells us "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" In John 1:1-3 we are told "*In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*"
- Mormonism: Joseph Smith said that matter and intelligence are eternal, they existed forever. The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics says matter couldn't have been around forever.

View of God:

The Mormon God is not the same as the God of the Christian Bible. Mormonism teaches, "*As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.*" In other words Mormonism teaches God was once a man and then became a god and that man can become a god.

- Christianity: There is only One God: James 2:19, Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10.
- Mormonism: The Existence of Many Gods: *Journal of Discourses* 2:345; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* p.370; *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 322-323; 576-577.
- Christianity: God Created the Universe by His Word: Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3
- Mormonism: God only Organized the Universe: *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 589-590
- Christianity: God the Father is not a Man: Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 31:3; Hos.11:9.
- Mormonism: God the Father is an Exalted Man: *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345-347; D&C 130:22.
- Christianity: God the Father is Spirit: John 4:24.
- Mormonism: God the Father is/was a man with a Physical Body: *Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22.
- Christianity: God the Father is Eternal: Isaiah 43:13; 44:6,8.
- Mormonism: God the Father had a beginning: *The Seer*, 132; *Mormon Doctrine* p.322.
- Mormonism: God was redeemed on another planet by another Jesus and achieved godhood.
- Mormonism: There are supposedly an infinite number of such gods ruling other planets, and every Mormon male aspires to become a god himself, which would add an infinite number of gods.

If multiple gods exist as in Mormonism, or any polytheistic religion, one cannot account for a universal objective moral code. Which god's rules should we follow if there is more than one god?

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- Christianity: God the Father has no Parent: Isaiah 43:13.
- Mormonism: God the Father has Parents: *The Seer*, p.132.

- Christianity: God is not married: Mark 12:28-30.
- Mormonism: God the Father is a Polygamist: *The Seer*, p.172.
- Mormonism: God is the literal father of every person on earth through physical sex with his many wives.
- Mormonism: God had physical sex with Mary to bring forth the Mormon "Jesus," who needed a physical body to become a god.

View of Jesus Christ:

- Christianity: Jesus was Begotten by the Holy Spirit: Matthew 1:1-18; Luke 1:26-35.
- Mormonism: Jesus was the physically conceived Son of God and not begotten by Holy Ghost: Mormon Doctrine, 546-547; *Come Unto Christ* by Ezra Taft Benson.

- Christianity: Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, who became man to live a perfect life, to be mankind's substitute on the Cross, and to rise from the dead, defeating death.
- Mormonism: Jesus is the spirit-brother to every man, and even Satan. Jesus is one of an endless number of gods and is a being separate from the Heavenly Father.

- Christianity: Jesus has always been God: John 1:1-18; Col. 2:9; Psalms 90:2.
- Mormonism: Jesus Became a god: *Desert News*, June 17, 1909; *Conference Report*, Apostle Richard Scott, April 7, 1997.

- Christianity: Satan is a Created Being, Created by Jesus: Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 12:9; Colossians 1:15-16.
- Mormonism: Jesus and Satan are Brothers: *Gospel Through the Ages*, p.15.

- Christianity: Jesus has only One Bride: the Church; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:9.
- Mormonism: Jesus was a Polygamist; *Journal of Discourses*, vol.1:345-346 and vol.2, 82,210.

Sin and Salvation:

- Christianity: Men can only become Children of God: John 1:12; Romans 8:23.
- Mormonism: Men can become gods: *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2:345; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* p. 346-347.

- Christianity: Every person has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ and His redeeming work on the Cross.
- Mormonism: Sin was part of God's plan. Without it mankind could not progress to become like God. Salvation is a combination of faith and works.

- Christianity: There is no Salvation after Death: Hebrews 3:7-8, 13, 15; 9:27.
- Mormonism: There is Salvation after Death: *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 669-672.

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- Christianity: There is Salvation only in Jesus Christ: John 3:16; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9.
- Mormonism: There is Salvation only in the LDS Church & Joseph Smith: *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol.1:350; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 670; *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7:289; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 670.
- Christianity: Salvation comes only by faith in Jesus: 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 2:16-21; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:9; Titus 3:5-7.
- Mormonism: Salvation comes only through the LDS Church by following all the laws and ordinances of the LDS gospel: *Third Article of Faith*, *Mormon Doctrine* p. 670, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, 306-311.

Life After Death:

- Christianity: Mankind will live forever either in heaven or in hell. We can get to heaven because we are saved by Grace through Faith in Jesus.
- Mormonism: Even after death, everyone has an opportunity to respond to the gospel. Heaven has three levels, and those who attain the highest level become gods, ruling and populating their own universe.

In conclusion let me say Mormons may be very fine people and are free to believe whatever they desire. They may call themselves *Latter Day Saints* or *Mormons* but they certainly cannot call themselves *Christian* as I have explained above.

How do I know my Bible is true?

On a CD I heard Josh McDowell, a former atheist, discuss the topic "*how do you present truth in a world where all truth is equal.*"

Josh said he once asked a group of youth ministers "*do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?*" Yes.

"*Do you believe the Bible is true?*" Yes.

"*Do you believe the Bible is historically accurate and reliable?*" Yes.

"*Why do you believe the Bible is historically accurate and reliable?*"

The answer given was "because I '*believe*' it to be true."

Josh responded " *...the difference between you and me is that to you it's true because you believe it. For me, I believe the Bible because it's true.*"

What Josh McDowell is saying is the bible is not true simply because we believe it to be true or because we have faith that it is true. It is true, in part, because the evidence is there supporting Biblical claims.

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"The Bible stands alone among all other books. It is unique, 'different from all others,' in the following ways (plus a multitude more): Continuity, Circulation, Translation, Survival, Teachings, Influence on Literature, and Influence on Civilization." Source: Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Pg. 4, 4-16

Besides the fulfillment of prophecy, biblical manuscripts, extra-biblical accounts, and archaeology help establish the events in the Bible. These are proofs that the BoM and other Mormon texts fail miserably. The following is just a sampling.

Biblical Manuscripts:

Biblical manuscripts are evaluated several different ways sometimes referred to as the bibliography test to determine if what we have today is what was written down originally. There are two parts of the bibliography test.

First, how many early copies do we have? The more copies you have the easier it is to reconstruct the original to detect errors and discrepancies and to determine if changes have been introduced over time. There are over 24,000 New Testament manuscripts and fragments.

The second part of the test is examining the time between the original manuscript and the earliest copy. The closer the copies are to the original the more reliable they are because the closer you are the less chance there is of someone introducing fiction to the accounts.

At one time the oldest copies of the Old Testament scriptures were from around 1,000 A.D. The Dead Sea Scrolls take us back beyond 100 B.C., more than 1,000 years before those existing manuscripts and show that the copies from 1,000 A.D. are virtually the same as the copies from 100 B.C. The Dead Sea Scrolls are comprised of thousands of scroll fragments, the most well known include the Isaiah Scroll which is nearly intact.

With the New Testament there are around 25,000 original copies and fragments some of which are only a couple of decades older than the original at worst and perhaps as close as five years. The record evidence shows that from the earliest copies to what we have now there have been virtually no changes other than an occasional copyist error, but with so many copies we know what the original was. Certainly there have been no changes that change anything we know about Jesus and no changes that affect doctrine. The same cannot be said for Mormonism, as shown above there have been significant changes over the last 180 years.

| Author | Date Written | Earliest Copy | Approximate Time Span between original & copy | Number of Copies | Accuracy of Copies |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Plato | 427-347 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1200 yrs | 7 | ? |
| Herodotus | 480-425 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1300 yrs | 8 | ? |
| Euripides | 480-406 B.C. | 1100 A.D. | 1300 yrs | 9 | ? |
| Caesar | 100-44 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1000 | 10 | ? |
| Tacitus | circa 100 A.D. | 1100 A.D. | 1000 yrs | 20 | ? |

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|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Aristotle | 384-322 B.C. | 1100 A.D. | 1400 | 49 | ? |
| Sophocles | 496-406 B.C. | 1000 A.D. | 1400 yrs | 193 | ? |
| Homer (Iliad) | 900 B.C. | 400 B.C. | 500 yrs | 643 | 95% |
| New Testament | 1st Cent. A.D. (50-100 A.D.) | 1st Cent. A.D. | A few decades | 25,000 | 99.5% |

Extra-biblical Accounts- Extra-biblical accounts are those accounts in history that verify the history of the Bible but come from non-religious, oftentimes hostile, sources.

Accounts of Jesus:

- Jewish historian Josephus (37 A.D.–100 A.D.) writes about Jesus being both a teacher and a miracle worker who attracted both Jew and Gentile and was condemned to the cross. Josephus also wrote about Jesus' resurrection on the third day. *Antiquities XVIII, iii, 3,*
- Josephus reports the execution of John called Baptist by Herod and describes John's character and work. *Antiquities XVIII, v, 2*
- Josephus wrote disapprovingly of the sentence pronounced by the high priest Ananus against "James, brother of Jesus Who was called Christ." *Antiquities XX, ix, 1*
- Tacitus in 115 A.D. recorded Nero's persecution of the Christians, "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, . . . but even in Rome."
- Pliny the Younger, Emperor of Bythynia writing to Emperor Trajan in 112 A.D. wrote regarding followers of Christ, "They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wicked deed, but to abstain from all fraud, theft and adultery, never to break their word, or deny a trust when called upon to honor it; after which it was their custom to separate, and then meet again to partake of food, but ordinary and innocent kind."

Accounts of Pontius Pilot:

- Josephus also wrote about Pontius Pilot of whom some believed no proof existed outside the Gospels.

...When Gratus had done those things, he went back to Rome, after he had tarried in Judea eleven years, when Pontius Pilate came as his successor...—*Complete Works of Flavius Josephus*

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...But now Pilate, the procurator of Judea, removed the army from Cesarea to Jerusalem, to take their winter quarters there, in order to abolish the Jewish laws. So he introduced Caesar's effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city; whereas our law forbids us the very making of images; on which account the former procurators were wont to make their entry into the city with such ensigns as had not those ornaments. Pilate was the first who brought those images to Jerusalem, and set them up there; which was done without the knowledge of the people, because it was done in the night time...—*Complete Works of Flavius Josephus*

- Additional evidence for Pontius Pilate was discovered in Caesarea Maritima in 1961. An archaeologist uncovered a fragment of a plaque that was used as a section of steps leading to the Caesarea Theater. The inscription in Latin stated, "Pontius Pilatus, Prefect of Judea has dedicated to the people of Caesarea a temple in honor of Tiberius." This temple was dedicated to the Emperor Tiberius who reigned from 14–37 A.D. The New Testament records that Pilot ruled as procurator from 26–36 A.D.
- Tacitus, a Roman historian of the first century, also confirms the New Testament designation of Pilate. He writes, "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus. . . ."

There are over 39 extra-biblical sources that attest to over one hundred facts regarding the life and teachings of Jesus.

Archaeology:

The accuracy of the Bible has been supported by archaeology.

- Hittites: Prior to the late 19th century, nothing was known of the Hittites outside the Bible, and many critics alleged that they were an invention of the biblical authors. In 1876 inscriptions were found carved on rocks in Turkey. Ten years later clay tablets were found. It was proved these were all in the Hittite language. An entire museum is devoted to the study of the Hittites.
- The names of many of the Israelite cities, events, and people described in both the Old and New Testament that had been lost to history and whose existence was questioned have been substantiated.
- The sacking of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.: In Rome the triumphal arch Titus built for himself still exists, depicting his celebratory parade followed by the defeated Jews in chains. They are carrying an enormous Menorah carved in the marble on the top of Titus' triumphal arch.
- Sodom and Gomorrah: Archaeologists have found cities where Sodom and Gomorrah, long viewed as a legend, were said to have been located. Evidence shows that a massive fire had destroyed the city and that it was buried under a coating of ash several feet thick.

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A fire began on the roofs of the buildings causing them to collapse. This was the case in every house they excavated. This type of destruction is in line with the biblical account that the city was destroyed by fire that rained down from heaven.

- Jericho: some scholars had dismissed the story as legend. It has been discovered that Jericho had an impressive system of fortifications with a retaining wall fifteen feet high surrounding the city. At its top was an eight-foot brick wall strengthened from behind by an earthen rampart. Archeologists found evidence indicating a sudden collapse of the fortifications. Archeologist Garstang stated, "As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely..." This is notable because city walls fall inward, not outward when attacked.
- Jerusalem: An Israeli archaeologist found that ancient fortifications recently excavated in Jerusalem date back 3,000 years to the time of King Solomon and support the biblical narrative about the era.
- The historical accuracy of Luke: At one time, scholars did not view Luke's historical accounts in his Gospel and Acts as accurate. There appeared to be no evidence for several cities, persons, and locations that he named in his works. However, archaeological advances have revealed that Luke was a very accurate historian and the two books he has authored remain accurate documents of history.
 - Sir William Ramsay investigated biblical claims as he searched through Asia Minor which caused him to reverse his initial view of the reliability of the accounts written by Luke. He wrote, "I began with a mind unfavorable to it [Acts]...but more recently I found myself often brought into contact with the Book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth..."
 - In the announcement of Jesus' public ministry (Luke 3:1) Luke mentions, "Lysanius tetrarch of Abilene." Scholars questioned Luke's credibility since the only Lysanius known for centuries was a ruler of Chalcis who ruled from 40–36 B.C. However an inscription dating to be in the time of Tiberius, who ruled from 14–37 A.D., was found recording a temple dedication which names Lysanius as the "tetrarch of Abila" near Damascus. This matches well with Luke's account.
- Old Testament royal seal discovered: archaeologists unearth ancient relic from prince mentioned in Jeremiah. A team of archaeologists in Israel has unearthed what's believed to be the royal seal of an Old Testament prince who is said to have tossed the prophet Jeremiah down a well.
- Siloam Pool: Archaeologists in Jerusalem have identified the remains of the Siloam Pool.

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- Ancient handle with Hebrew text found in Jerusalem: Archaeologists digging on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives have discovered a nearly 3,000-year-old jar handle bearing ancient Hebrew script, a find significantly older than most inscribed artifacts unearthed in the ancient city, an archaeologist said.
- Ancient biblical waterworks found in Israel: Archaeologists in Israel have unearthed an ancient water system which was modified by the conquering Persians to turn the desert into a paradise. The network of reservoirs, drain pipes and underground tunnels served one of the grandest palaces in the biblical kingdom of Judea.
- First Temple seal found in City of David: An ancient seal bearing an archaic Hebrew inscription dating back to the 8th century BCE has been uncovered in an archeological excavation in Jerusalem's City of David.

One could argue that given time perhaps Mormons might find something from archaeology efforts that is mentioned in the BoM but that seems to be unlikely. The archaeological record continues to prove the Bible, not disprove it.

Couple the lack of archaeological support for the BoM with the fact that more and more Christian Biblical manuscripts keep moving us closer to the original and verifies that no changes have occurred from the original to what we have now is in direct contrast with how the original BoM is pretty much off limits and that later editions keep moving farther and farther away from the original, not closer.

Everything I have mentioned above should help anyone who may be considering the merits of Mormonism realize that there is absolutely no link between Mormonism and historical Christianity.

- *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:11*
- *Test everything. 1 Thessalonians 5:21*
- *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1*

The things I touched on above are just a tiny tip of the iceberg. If you want more examples try some of the follow sites:

Free book download from Josh McDowell: *Reasons Skeptics Should Consider Christianity*

<http://joshmcdowellmedia.org/FreeBooks/ReasonsSkepticsShouldConsiderChristianity.pdf>

Free book download from Josh McDowell: *Skeptics Who Demanded a Verdict*

<http://joshmcdowellmedia.org/FreeBooks/SkepticsWhoDemandedaVerdict.pdf>

Saints Alive <http://www.saintsalive.com> Mormonism Research Center <http://mrm.org>

Utah Lighthouse Ministry <http://www.utlm.org>

H.I.S. (He Is Savior) Ministries International <http://www.hismin.com>

Questions for your Priesthood Leader <http://www.hismin.com/questions.html>

Word for the Weary <http://www.answeringlds.org>

Is Mormonism Christian? <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/michaeldavis/docs/mormonism/mormonism.html>

The "Testimony" of the Book of Mormon <http://www.thebereancall.org/node/8246>

Should a Christian pray about the Book of Mormon? <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-sum/sum-r003.html>

Changes in the Book of Mormon http://www.mormonwiki.org/Changes_in_the_Book_of_Mormon

Are the Biblical Documents Reliable? <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/bib-docu.html>