

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Latter Day Saints: A Summary and Evaluation of Mormonism

CHRISTIAN STUDY LIBRARY

1

Mormonism is on fire. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is burning up the religious landscape in the United States. In 1800 there were no Mormons; in 1950 there were around two million; estimates today are around thirteen million. Recently the Mormon church has been brought to the spotlight through Mitt Romney's run for president, Glenn Beck on FOX, David Archuleta's #2 spot on *American Idol* in 2008, and the recent trials over polygamy that we've read about in newspapers and blogs. Many know about Steve Young, Brigham Young University, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and those crisply dressed young male missionaries with the shiny black name tags. Many of us have seen one of the Mormon temples spread around the world, from Australia to Korea to the Philippines to China to South America and beyond. In a word, we can't escape the Mormon religion: it is as ubiquitous as baseball and hotdogs.

In recent years, Mormons have been attempting to name themselves Christians. "We're Christians too" is a theme song of the Mormon missionaries. What should we make of that claim? I'm guessing that some of us would quickly agree that Mormons are *not* Christians in the historic sense of the term, but exactly why can they try to use that label? Should we budge an inch and let them take the name in the broad sense of the term, and include them in our larger Christian church: Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, and Reformed? The answer is the strongest and loudest *no* you can yell next time you hear the question: Are Mormons Christians? This will become evident as we dig a bit deeper into what Mormons teach.

The following discussion has two basic parts. First, we take a historical and theological trek through Mormonism. In a point by point, straightforward manner, we will discuss the major teachings and beliefs of Latter-Day Saints. After observing the "brute facts" of Mormonism, we engage in a critical evaluation, matching them up with the historic Christian faith. Also, in the second part, we learn that the inner workings of Mormonism — the nuts and bolts of their theology — are neither logical nor biblical. Much of the information I use about Mormon doctrines is found on their website, www.lds.org; what follows is but a very brief survey. I only quote official sources, and since footnoting every source would significantly lengthen the article, most of the following quotes are

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

“googleable” (you can Google them to find the source). Please note that each quote from a significant Mormon authority can be documented and thus is part of Mormonism.

Joseph Smith

To understand Mormonism we start with Joseph Smith (b. 1805). One of the Mormon scriptures, *The Doctrine and the Covenants (D&C)* says, “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (135:3). The late President, Gordon Hinckley (d. 2008) said, “Our entire case, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, rests on the validity of this glorious first vision. Nothing on which we base our doctrine, nothing we teach, nothing we live by, is of greater importance than this initial declaration.” In other words, Joseph Smith is one of the foundations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He is not their savior, but without him, according to Hinckley, the truths of Mormonism would not stand.

Smith’s “glorious first vision” came in 1820, when he was around 15 years old, as a resident of west New York State. He was praying and meditating when suddenly he saw a bright pillar of light over his head. “When the light rested upon me I saw two personages,” wrote Smith, “whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air.” One spoke to the young boy, pointed to the other personage, and said, “This is my beloved Son; hear him.” Smith later noted that these two “personages” were the Father and Jesus Christ: Smith saw *both* as distinct personages. From this revelation the Mormon church was born.

From this date on, Smith had many more visions, some of which became later Mormon scriptures, which are addressed briefly below. In 1827, after a few years of attempting to get golden plates that he heard about in another revelation, Smith was finally allowed by the angel Moroni (more info on Moroni below) to have the plates. Smith was led to a hill where he dug and found golden plates along with a mysterious translating device that allowed him to read the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic picture script that he found on these plates. Smith enlisted several people, including his wife, to help him translate the plates. While the helpers were not allowed to see the plates during translation, later these eleven witnesses signed a statement saying they did see the plates.

While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to highlight the details of subsequent Mormon history, the literal movement of the Mormon church is worth noting. The history of Mormon travels is significant for all Mormons; it is an interesting topic to study. They compare their journey to similar ones in the Old Testament. After Smith’s revelation, many followers moved from New York to Ohio to Missouri (where they say Zion was physically located) to Illinois to Salt Lake in 1847, where many still reside today. Along

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

these lines is the Mormon enthusiasm for genealogies, though it would take us too far afield here. Again, this history is part and parcel to the Mormon faith.

The Book of Mormon

One of the foundational scriptures of Mormonism is *The Book of Mormon (BoM)*. They call it “another testament of Jesus Christ.” They affirm and use the Bible (rightly translated); the *BoM* stands right next to the Bible as another word of God. Joseph Smith said about the *BoM*, “*The Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding its precepts, than any other book.*” Along with Smith and his revelation, the *BoM* is a pillar of Latter Day Saint theology and practice.

The *BoM* is the history of a people from around 2000 BC to AD 421. It is roughly the length of the Bible, sounds exactly like the KJV, and reads mostly as history, but some theology and doctrine is found in it as well. In the *BoM*, some Jews from the kingdom years in the OT fled persecution and made several trips to Central America (though the exact location is disputed within Mormon scholarship). When in Central America, the Nephites and Lamanites (the two main people groups — Jewish peoples) set up massive civilizations. The *BoM* says that their cities covered the lands and the people numbered as the sands on the seashore (Mormon 1:7). While in Central America, they built ships, synagogues, sanctuaries, and temples; they had shields, compasses, silk, armor, cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, and elephants, among other things (cf. Ether 9:17–19; 15:15).

In the *BoM*, destruction — earthquakes, storms, and darkness — came to Central America when Jesus died in Jerusalem (around AD 34; cf. 3 Nephi 11:1–12). This destruction killed many wicked people in Central America, and the resurrected Christ appeared to those who remained. The resurrected Jesus taught these Central American people the Sermon on the Mount, the institution of the Supper and baptism, and so forth. He then ascended into heaven.

Later on, in the 5th century AD — still in Central America — a Nephite named Mormon gathered all the plates of the history of his people (dating back over 2000 years) and summarized them into one set of plates, and his son Moroni buried them around AD 421. These plates are what Smith found, what the now-angel Moroni showed him, which is now called *The Book of Mormon*. Along with the *BoM*, the Mormon church recognizes the *Doctrine and the Covenants (D&C)*, the *Pearl of Great Price*, and the *Bible* rightly translated — all these are their scriptures. Smith recorded many of his prophecies in the *BoM*, *D&C*, and the *Pearl of Great Price* before he was murdered in 1844 (note: these three books also contain the prophecies/revelations of other significant Mormon leaders and prophets).

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Mormon World History

“Long ago you and I were born as spirit children of God, and naturally, a Goddess, actual beings of glorified human form and substance.” This is the way one Mormon author explains the eternal period of existence before creation. Before creation, Mormons teach, God the Father (*Elohim*) had some sort of physical sexual intercourse with a goddess who then gave birth to spirit children. The first born spirit-child was Jesus, whose brother was Lucifer. People are also spirit-children, the offspring of *Elohim*. In the words of another Mormon authority, *“Before you began your life on earth, you lived with your Heavenly Father as one of his spirit children.”*

Brigham Young (d. 1877) the second president of the Mormon church (Smith being the first) wrote, *“We were first made spiritual, and afterwards temporal.”* In other words, before people had physical bodies, they existed as spiritual entities. In fact, not only did spirit-children exist before creation, so did the “elements.” And these elements are eternal (*D&C 93:33*). There was “stuff” or material or matter or intelligence — *something* — that is eternal, that had no beginning. Of course, *Elohim* and other gods (male and female) are eternal as well. Brigham Young said, *“How many Gods there are I do not know, but there never was a time when there were not Gods.”* We discuss below the Mormon teaching of “gods.” For now, simply note that before creation, there was/were,

1. God/gods,
2. spirit-children, and
3. unorganized matter or “elements.”

Concerning creation, Mormons teach that the gods created the world (including God/*Elohim* as the leader). Smith taught, *“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 in it.”* Gods created the world out of preexistent matter in a manner similar to the way that construction workers make a house. Mormons strongly deny the *ex-nihilo* (creation out of nothing) teaching of historic Christianity. Additionally, J. F. Smith (d. 1918), the tenth president of the Mormon church, declared that Adam in his spirit existence helped form this earth — he said *“perhaps Noah and Enoch”* did as well, *“and why not Joseph Smith?”* Mormons also teach that God created the world out of love, so that his spirit-children would have a place to dwell, a place wherein to progress to salvation. Mormons teach that God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives, a plan that we were involved in before creation itself.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Adam and Eve were historical people. They were, with us, spirit beings before creation, but they were the first humans on earth. They lived in the Garden of Eden, which Mormons teach is in Independence, Missouri. Eve sinned by eating the fruit; Adam committed a transgression when he ate. Note the terminology: Adam didn't sin; he *transgressed* God's law, and Adam's transgression opened the door of salvation. He said, "*Blessed be name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy*" (Moses 5:10). Adam fell that man might be and progress in this life, on this earth (2 Nephi 2:25). In a mysterious way, the fall was a fall upward, and Adam did the right thing by eating the fruit. Also fundamental to Mormon doctrine is their absolute denial of original sin: it is written in their foundational document, *Articles of Faith*. That is, since Adam's transgression was not a sin, there is no sin to pass down to his descendants.

Mormon Theology Proper

Mormon theologians and scriptures teach that God is loving, compassionate, caring, and powerful. In general terms, Mormons speak about God the same way Christians do. However, there are extreme differences. For example, many Mormon theologians teach that God progresses. Smith himself said, "*God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man ... 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 ... he was once a man like us ... here then is eternal life — to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves.*" Lorenzo Snow, the fifth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints said — now famously — "*As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be.*" In fact, "*God ... has flesh and bones,*" Smith wrote elsewhere. In summary, Mormon theology holds that God was a man like you or me, who progressed to be the God that he is now. Orson Pratt even taught that God continues to progress in knowledge and power.

One other significant aspect of Mormon theology proper is that God is subject "*to the laws which govern ... even the most refined order of physical existence.*" In other words, since God is at least in some real sense a physical being (remember he had some kind of physical sex with a goddess); he is subject to the laws that govern physical being. Since he has a body like people, he is confined to certain limits of physical existence — he has parts that take up some kind of space. Of course, he has to progress, since he is not outside of the laws of progression. This progression in Mormon theology even touches God's fatherhood: Mormons teach the fatherhood of God *ad infinitum*. Smith: "*If Jesus Christ was the son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father?*"

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

Finally, concerning theology proper, Mormon theology is not Trinitarian: *“Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ... I say that is a strange God anyhow ... three in one, one in three! It is a curious organization ... All are to be crammed into one God according to sectarianism (read: Christian theology). He would be a giant or monster,”* Smith preached. Another Mormon publication says, *“We declare it is self-evident from the scriptures that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are separate persons, three divine beings.”* In other words, there is not one God, but three Gods — three different and distinct beings who share the title “God” but not the substance or essence of a single being. To reword the historic Christian Athanasian Creed: the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Spirit is Lord: yet these are three Lords, not one Lord.

6

The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)

We have already noted the creation and fall of man: it is a historical fact in Mormonism. Again, we learned that Adam’s fall was not a sin, but an upward sort of transgression, which resulted in the possibility of spirit-children to take on human bodies, Adam and Eve’s many descendants. There is not a huge gap between God and man in Mormon theology. Joseph Smith said, *“We say that God himself is a self-existent being ... Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? Man does exist on the same principles ... The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal with God himself ... The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end ... The first principles of man are self-existent with God.”* Even more boldly, Mormon theologian Bruce McConkie said, *“Man and God are of the same race.”* In other words, humans and God are on the same being-scale; God is only exalted and higher on the scale or ladder. There is no Creator/creature distinction in Mormon theology. There is a difference, but it is not an ontological or metaphysical essential distinction, just one of progress on the same scale of being.

Another thing to note about Mormon anthropology is again the teaching of progression. Man can by faith and obedience — as we note in a few moments — attain godhood, in a way similar to God’s progression to godhood. This has everything to do with the Mormon doctrine of salvation: how people attain godhood. We return to this topic after briefly examining the Christ of Mormon Christology. For now simply note that as God progressed to where he is now (and where he will go as he progresses still), man follows in the progression stage.

The Doctrine of Christ (Christology)

Jesus is Jehovah, the Son of God, the Savior; hence the name of the church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He is a loving and caring Savior, the firstborn of all

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

spirit-children. He was a spirit-child of God and a goddess — before us, but with us — in the stillness of pre-creation time. Lucifer, or Satan, is a spirit-brother of Jesus (and in turn, humans). According to one Mormon writing, *“Both the scriptures and the prophets affirm that Jesus Christ and Lucifer are indeed offspring of our heavenly Father, and, therefore, spirit brothers ... Jesus was Lucifer’s older brother.”*

Jesus *“was not begotten by the Holy Ghost,”* according to Young. Joseph F. Smith said, *“Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God.”* God the Father had intercourse with Mary, and the result was Jesus’ conception. She was still a virgin because she didn’t have sex with an earthly man, but a progressed God. Jesus, after God’s prior progression, also progressed by obedience and faith. Jesus was saved by his faithfulness. According to McConkie, Christ *“is a saved being.”* Again, progression is key: God, man, and Jesus progress to salvation and godhood.

Mormons teach that Jesus is the only Savior, and apart from him there is no salvation. Many Mormon authorities sound similar to Christian teaching about Jesus as Savior. Through his suffering at Gethsemane and the cross, Jesus saves people. Actually, according to www.lds.org, *“Through the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, all people will be resurrected — saved from physical death.”* This general salvation that Jesus accomplished is a free gift from the Savior to *all* humans. Yet this universal resurrection as gift is by no means a resurrection to eternal blessedness in the highest degree — some are raised by Jesus as gift only to wind up in some semi-blessed state.

The Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

We’ve already touched on salvation in the sections on the doctrine of man and the doctrine of Christ; now we tie those themes together. According to the Mormon text *Gospel Principles*, exalted Mormons *“will have everything that our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have: all power, glory, dominion, and knowledge.”* Men become (a) god according to Mormon soteriology: exalted people (saved people) will share some of God’s essential or divine attributes (characteristics). Notice yet again the theme of progression: men climb the ladder of being to the attainment of godhood, or exaltation.

How does a person attain this salvation in Mormonism? By faith in Jesus Christ: *“the fundamental principle of our religion is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,”* as one Mormon president said. Of course this means repenting and trusting, but in Mormon theology, the definition of faith includes faithfulness. According to McConkie, *“Faith ... includes good works ... Works are part of the definition of faith, and without them there is no faith.”* *“Faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness.”* To be saved means to trust and obey, for there’s no other way to attain godhood in Mormon theology (see *D&C*, 132:20–21). It is clear then that Mormon soteriology is completely at odds with the *“faith alone”*

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

teaching that many orthodox Christians hold so dear. One Mormon teacher wrote, *“The sectarian doctrine of justification by faith alone has exercised an influence for evil since the early days of Christianity.”*

According to www.lds.org, *“Those who have been baptized and have received the Holy Ghost through the proper priesthood authority have been conditionally saved from sin. In this sense, salvation is conditional, depending on an individual’s continuing in faithfulness, or enduring to the end in keeping the commandments of God.”* Faith is essential for salvation, but not enough; you must keep the commandments of God to climb the ladder to godhood. Though it is another topic, Mormonism teaches levels of glory: the celestial, the terrestrial, and the telestial kingdoms. *“The glory we inherit will depend on the depth of our conversion, expressed by our obedience to the Lord’s commandments. It will depend on the manner in which we have received the testimony of Jesus.”* In summary, the more faithfulness a person shows, the higher he or she will climb on the ladder: the top of the ladder is the celestial kingdom, where humans reign as gods over their own kingdoms, wives and all.

The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

When Joseph Smith found the golden plates in 1827 (which resulted eventually in the *BoM*), it was the restoration of the gospel and church of Christ. God reestablished his church on earth through Smith and the plates. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is a continuation of the Church of Christ in the New Testament, according to Mormon theology. Smith received his revelation because there were no true churches on earth. In fact, in his vision he was told that all churches of his day were apostate. Thus, the Mormon church is the only true church on earth (*D&C* 1:30) and there was no drop of gospel-truth from the early days of church history until the American Joseph Smith was used by God to rekindle the church. Many early Mormon authorities (Smith, Young, Taylor, etc.) often said that Christianity was a tool of the devil, a bag of stinking falsities. As an interesting side note, some Mormons will give the Reformers a nod for their attempt to take the church back, though Mormons will say they fell quite short.

For Mormonism, the doctrine of ongoing, or progressive, prophecy and revelation is central. As we saw earlier, some of the fundamental truths of the Mormon church are Smith’s revelations in the 1820’s, along with other revelations of later Mormon teachers and prophets. In fact, in 1829, Peter, James, and John appeared to Smith and a friend of his and gave him the keys of the kingdom and made them apostles. In this way, the Melchizedekian priesthood was officially restored. There are still apostles and prophets in the Mormon church — fifteen total, including the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *“Prophets ... receive revelation for the church;”* the Scriptures are not closed; the canon is open and dynamic, always progressing, always becoming.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Revelation can change, as with the change in the stance on polygamy and with the change in the stance against black people holding the priesthood. In a word, Mormon theology holds that divine revelation and prophecy is still going on and fluctuating from the Old and New Testament times. This is why the Mormon church has several scriptures, not just the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Another aspect of Mormon teaching that goes hand in hand with the doctrine of the church and ongoing revelation is the internal voice of the Holy Ghost, which assures a person that the *Book of Mormon* is true and that Smith was a true prophet of God. In fact, if you look at nearly any copy of the *BoM*, you will see on the inside flap somewhere a phrase that suggests reading the book and earnest, intense, heart-felt prayer will result in the Holy Ghost testifying that these things are true. Joseph Smith said this internal call is unmediated — that is, without book or voice, but God directly communicating to a person without external means. I've had several discussions with Mormons where they always end on this note: *"I know it is true because I prayed it and the Spirit told me"* (or something similar). This is one of the highest validations for Mormons concerning the truth of their religion: they will look you in the eye and in some way explain that they have a warm feeling deep down inside that Mormon teaching is true. For Mormons, you cannot question this revelation, because it is internal and unmediated.

LATTER DAY SAINTS: A SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF MORMONISM (2)

Mormonism and Historic Christianity: The Comparison

Many Christian readers will already see a stark, dark, and deep difference between Christianity and Mormonism. There are many ways to approach this topic of comparing Mormonism and Christianity. I've read — and you've probably seen — many good websites, books, and essays on this very subject. There are many helpful ones; you need only to search the topic to find quality material (and some not-so-good information). I encourage the reader to see what Anthony Hoekema, Walter Martin, James White, Bill McKeever, and Jerald and Sandra Tanner (and others who have examined, evaluated, and done excellent work in this area) have written on this topic. For the sake of clarity, in a point-by-point manner, we now compare the two in the same order we looked at Mormon teachings. Many have rightly pointed out how Mormon history is incompatible and incoherent due to lack of archaeological evidence. For example, they say the American Indians are some sort of cursed Jews, whereas DNA tests have shown American Indians to be genetic relatives of Eastern peoples. They also note huge

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

Nephite/Lamanite cultures in Central America that secular archaeologists have not been able to confirm. However, the following discussion is primarily focused on the religious/spiritual side of things, rather than the archeological/historical side.

The careful reader will notice the absence of a separate discussion of the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology) below. Instead of giving it a separate section, I have included the different parts of it in the other sections below. Finally, one more note before moving on: I have only provided one or two examples under each heading, when in fact there are many more examples that prove my point. I have left many out for reasons of space and ease of reading.

Joseph Smith: Prophet?

For a prophet to be a true prophet, he must be trustworthy; i.e. his prophecies must be validated. Smith, in *D&C 87:1–3* prophesied that the Civil War would spread to all nations: “Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of *South* Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; And the *time* will come that *war* will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place.” A few verses later, Smith noted that the war would also move to Great Britain. One doesn’t even need to read history books to realize this *did not* happen. No matter how you slice it, as they say, this prophecy was patently false and never came to pass at all. Hence, Smith as true prophet is in serious question. How can you trust a prophet whose prophecies do not come true? If one prophecy was false, that brings into question the rest of the prophet’s words.

On the other hand, the prophecies of the Bible are consistent and verifiable. Start with [Genesis 3:15](#), where Moses writes that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent’s seed. It happened at the cross and in the resurrection. Also, note Joel (OT) and Jesus (NT) both said that the Spirit would come upon God’s people. It happened in [Acts 2](#), at Pentecost. The Bible can stand up to the validation test of prophecy. Only the Word of God is true and trustworthy at every point: Jesus is the way, the *truth*, and the life.

If indeed Smith was another prophet along the lines of the biblical prophets, one would expect a *crystal clear* emphasis of this in the OT and NT. If the *BoM* is indeed another testament, you would no doubt see this clearly noted in the OT and NT. However, the Bible says nothing about a third testament. To be sure, many Mormon scholars find prophecies in the Bible that speak about Smith, but in the history of exegesis (interpretation of Scripture) *no other commentators have ever said anything about the Bible prophesying about a third testament that would come to a man in America in the nineteenth century*. You can read early church fathers like Ignatius, the letters of Clement, Polycarp,

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

all of Philip Schaff's histories of the Christian church; you can read all the early to medieval church fathers, later teachers, catechisms, and creeds, and you will find no jot or tittle about a third testament and new prophet in America in the 1820s.

Historic Christianity teaches thus: Jesus is the final prophet, and the NT is the final testament. [Hebrews 1:1–2](#) says, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” In other words, many prophets spoke in many words and many places in the past (pre-NT era), but in the last days (NT era and beyond) God has spoken through his Son, the final prophet Jesus. In still other words, the NT stops itself. [Jude 3](#) tells us to contend for the faith *once for all delivered to the saints*. The divine deposit has been completed and delivered; the canon is closed. It is not fluctuating or progressing. Paul is the last apostle ([1 Corinthians 15:8](#)); the NT has fulfilled the promises of the OT, and the canon is complete. Of course, this has to do with the doctrine of the church as well: only the OT/NT constitutes the church. She needs no other Word from God.

To say that we need another prophet is to say Jesus didn't do his work as prophet well enough; it is to say that he has not perfectly revealed the will of God for our salvation. Even though Mormons adamantly teach that Smith is not their savior, without Smith, they would not know salvation or the “gospel principles.” Hence, a Mormon cannot be saved without the testimony of Smith. Historic Christianity needs no one besides Jesus: he is our final and perfect prophet, and the canon is closed because his work is done. He's in heaven, sending his Spirit to make the closed canon “live” for us in our present day. The Holy Spirit does not bring new prophecies, but reminds and teaches us the words of Christ ([John 14:16](#); [16:13–14](#)).

In a word, you cannot believe Joseph Smith *and* Jesus: the latter renders the former an unneeded and pointless prophet. Only Jesus has the words of life ([John 6:68](#)), the final Word. This has to do with the church as well: Jesus constituted his church and has given pastors, elders, and deacons who do not give new revelation but preach and teach what has already been spoken. The external written and preached word — in the power of the Holy Spirit — precedes, makes, and determines the same Spirit's work inside a person. That is objective truths of the Spirit speaking in Scripture trump and shape the subjective response of the believer; the former precedes and validates the latter. It is just the opposite in Mormonism.

The Book of Mormon

The *BoM* teaches that Jesus went to Central America after his resurrection, made disciples, and taught many things, as we learned earlier (3 Nephi 11:1–12). If Jesus had gone to Central America — or anywhere besides Palestine after his resurrection, one

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

would think this would be abundantly clear in the OT or NT. Not only is Scripture silent concerning a trek of Jesus to another country after his resurrection, the Bible actually puts Jesus in Palestine for the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. In [Acts 1:3](#), Luke writes that Jesus was seen by his chosen apostles for the forty days that he taught them about the kingdom of God. There is a clear contradiction — irreconcilable difference — between the *BoM* and the Bible; only one is correct. No matter which side a Mormon takes, he is chopping off the branch on which he sits — if the *BoM* is wrong, Mormonism falls. If the NT is wrong, the Bible falls. These are the horns of a dilemma that Mormonism cannot avoid. It is irrational and illogical for the Mormon to believe both at the same time.

Furthermore, if the *BoM* is indeed a “restored gospel” or “another testament” of Jesus, we should also be able to find this prophecy clearly in Scripture. We should be able to read Paul’s explanation of more Scripture, of “another testament;” we should be able to read about a third witness somewhere in our two witnesses (OT and NT). However, we do not. To be fair, many Mormon scholars quote OT and NT texts (i.e. [Ezekiel 37:16–19](#)) to show that the Bible refers to the *BoM*. However, this interpretation of biblical prophecy is completely out of step with the history of Christian interpretation. To repeat an earlier point, the Bible closes itself. The faith has been delivered: the body of teaching and history of the ways of God in the world is finished. If anyone adds to or takes away from the closed canon, he will be accursed ([Revelation 22:18](#)). In Paul’s terms, there is no more or new gospel: “*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*” ([Galatians 1:8](#)). We have all the “gospel principles” we need in the Old and New Testaments. Anything else is not from God. Anything else is another gospel — a false gospel — under God’s curse.

The *BoM* is also incoherent. Many words in it are historically anachronistic — that is, words like “Gospel of Jesus Christ,” “cross,” “church,” “Bible,” “crucify,” “Christian” are used in the *BoM* hundreds of years before Christ (BC). Also, another contradiction between the *BoM* and the Bible has to do with this anachronism. The *BoM* says followers of Christ were called Christians first around 73 BC ([Alma 46:15](#)) whereas the Bible says followers of Jesus were first called Christians in Antioch around 40 AD ([Acts 11:26](#)). Again, not only are these two completely opposite and contradictory, the *BoM* also runs roughshod over the progressive revelation from OT to NT. The *BoM* uses the same terms and concepts (except names) in the periods BC and AD. In the Bible, however, revelation progresses so we learn more about the Messiah slowly, in concealed ways, throughout the OT. The Bible does not use NT terms in the OT as the *BoM* does. In the Bible, the language matches the date. Again, to believe fully in the *BoM* and the Bible at the same time is irrational — only one can be true, not both.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

Moving to another aspect of the *BoM* and Mormonism's other scriptures, one finds stark contradictions. For example, Alma 31:15 says, "Holy, holy God; we believe that thou art God, and we believe that thou art holy, and that thou wast a spirit, and that thou art a spirit, and that thou wilt be a *spirit* forever" (emphasis mine). Completely in opposition, *D&C* 130:22 says that "The Father has a *body* of flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (emphasis mine). Which is it? The two cannot stand together: they are illogical. The context of the above Alma 31 verse is God's people speaking of themselves as children of God: in other words, "God" in Alma 31:15 is referring to the Father.

13

One more glaring contradiction is found between Alma 34:36 and *D&C* 130:3. In the former, we read that "*the Lord ... in the hearts of the righteous doth ... dwell.*" In the latter, we read, "*The idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false.*" Only one of the two can be correct, unless it is permissible for a trustworthy scripture to be illogical and incoherent. In summary, the internal teachings of the Mormon scriptures contradict each other. The words of Mormon scriptures are *not* "*pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*" ([Ps. 12:6](#)).

Finally, concerning Mormon scriptures, we notice more crystal clear examples of how they are at odds with the OT/NT. The *BoM* prophesied that Jesus would be born at Jerusalem (Alma 7:10), whereas the Bible prophesied that he would be born at Bethlehem ([Micah 5:2](#)). Many have made long lists of the unambiguous differences between the Bible and the Mormon scriptures: a quick Internet search will provide many such lists. Suffice it to say that the two are completely irreconcilable and cannot stand together at any time, any way, no matter how much one tries to harmonize them. They cannot be joined together *because they teach completely different and opposite things*.

Mormon World History, Anthropology, and Soteriology (Salvation)

Mormons teach that elements are eternal, as we read earlier. In other words, Mormon theology holds that before the creation of the world, there was a substance or matter that was co-eternal with God. This is anathema in historic Christianity — it is an affront to the essential attributes of God himself according to Scripture. Denying *ex nihilo* by asserting eternal matter is an unmistakable sign that Mormonism is opposed to historic Christianity. The Bible teaches that the triune God *alone* is eternal, without beginning or end, and that he created all things out of nothing. Scripture teaches that "*things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*" ([Heb. 11:3](#)). In other words, God has created all things ([Rev. 4:11](#)); "*all things*" include time, matter, creaturely intelligence, and so forth.

In historic Christian theology, before the creation of the world, time did not exist, matter did not exist, created intelligence did not exist, spirit-children did not exist, gods did not

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

exist — the only thing in existence was the triune God, who alone inhabits eternity. As Herman Bavinck wrote, “*if only a single particle were not created out of nothing, God would not be God.*” Exactly: since Mormonism denies *ex nihilo*, their god is a fabricated figment of the fallen imagination, not the triune God of Scripture.

Also, it is quite clear to most Christians that we did *not* exist as spirit-beings before creation. Paul himself said it quite clearly — and [Genesis 1–3](#) is firm on the matter — that Adam was the first human, a man of the earth, of the dust ([1 Cor. 15:47](#)). He was created body first, and then God breathed into him the breath of life. That “breath of life” was not a pre-existent spirit-being, but the very life created by God’s word on the sixth day of creation. Mormonism and historic Christianity cannot be reconciled at this point. Not only are they irreconcilable, they are completely at odds. Mormonism says “spirit-being” first, then earthly being; Christianity says no.

Concerning Adam and Eve, historic Christianity has said the church existed from the beginning of the world and will continue to the end. There is no point in history where Christ’s church disappears, as Mormonism teaches. Joseph Smith said there were no true churches on the earth at the beginning of his call; Jesus says *the gates of hell will not prevail against the church*. Here is yet another clear and contradictory difference.

Though we are under the heading world history and not theology proper, it is important to note that the Christian position flatly and firmly denies that a plurality of gods helped God create the world. Again, this runs against every fiber, every tenet, every precept and principle of the teaching of historic Christianity. When Brigham Young said there were many gods, when Joseph Smith said that the gods helped create world out of pre-existing matter, they were speaking *against* the historic Christian teaching of creation. From [Genesis 1:1](#), “*In the beginning God,*” to [Isaiah 44:24](#), “*I am the lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself,*” the Scripture is unequivocal: the triune God alone created all things out of nothing. In fact, this is such an essential doctrine that not believing it means a person is not a Christian at all. If one cannot affirm the opening words of Genesis with the NT church, he cannot wear a name tag “Christian.”

What of Adam and Eve and the fall? Mormonism teaches the contrary of what Christianity teaches. Mormons, as Smith said, teach that Adam’s fall was a fall upwards, a good thing that enabled the spirit-children to take on human bodies. Mormonism equivocates the fall of Adam. Historic Christian churches teach — following the warp and woof of the whole Bible — that Adam’s sin was a fall, an ethical transgression, a breaking of the covenant of works, and that his sin plunged the whole world into bondage and death. There was nothing good in Adam’s sin, even if God did use it for his purposes. [Romans 5](#) and elsewhere plainly calls Adam’s sin the reason for the sin, death,

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

and condemnation that spread to all people. Also, historic Christians have typically taught original sin, that Adam represented all people in the garden, and when he fell, we fell with him; *"In Adam's fall we sinned all"* is the language of historic Christianity (cf. [Psalm 51:5](#)). Let's be clear as we move on: when Mormonism calls Adam's sin a *"fall upward,"* they are calling evil good, as Isaiah warns against (5:20).

Concerning man's salvation and destiny, we saw how Mormons teach progression: if one trusts in Jesus Christ, believes the fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and is obedient to the "gospel principles," he will attain godhood in the highest of the three spheres. Again, Mormons teach that you have to *"trust and obey"* instead of simply believe the gospel. *D&C 132:21* says, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory."*

Mormons hate the doctrine of faith alone that Christians hold so dearly. In this regard, Mormons are modern day versions of Pelagius, or at least in his family: they deny original sin and teach that obedience is in the definition of faith. Paul's view, however — which Augustine, Luther, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Standards follow — is that a person is justified simply by believing ([Galatians 2:16, 3:10–12](#)). Believing (faith) under the rubric of justification *does not include works or faithfulness*. Mormons attempt to call faith a gift, but it is a reward of faithfulness. [Romans 4:1](#) says the opposite — rewarding faithfulness or works is simply a person's "due" for that faithfulness, not a gift. To call the reward for doing something a "gift" is to water down grace into something partially earned and *sola fide* is trampled upon.

Also, while Mormons teach that man can attain godhood, Christians say no way. According to Scripture and Christian theology, man will never share any of the incommunicable attributes of God, the characteristics that God himself has, that make him God. Again, this has to do with the Creator/creature distinction. Mormons have no clear distinction; Christians do have a clear distinction.

LATTER DAY SAINTS: A SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF MORMONISM (3)

Theology Proper

To list all the differences between Mormon theology proper (doctrine of God) and historic Christian theology would be a book in itself. To repeat a few things already stated, Mormonism teaches that there are many gods. Though they say they don't worship them all and thus say "we are not polytheists," it is in the framework of their doctrine that there

WWW.LIONANDLAMBAPOLOGETICS.ORG

© 2023, LION AND LAMB APOLOGETICS—1305 CHESTER ST—CLEBURNE, TX 76033

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

are many gods. In the historic, biblical Christian position, this is repulsive beyond words. So very boldly and clearly does Yahweh in Scripture declare truths: “The lord is God; there is no other besides him” ([Deuteronomy 4:35](#)), and, “There is none holy like the lord; there is none besides you” ([1 Samuel 2:2](#)). The entire premise of [Job 38-42](#) and [Isaiah 44-55](#) proclaims unambiguously that there is only one eternal, invisible, immortal, divine being who has revealed himself as Yahweh, the Lord God. Paul is also clear: God is the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God ([1 Timothy 1:17](#)). Granted, we don’t learn this all from early OT texts, because as Bible history moves forward, God reveals himself in a deeper, richer way, ending with Jesus Christ, God in the flesh.

In Christian theological terms, there is a clear distinction between Creator and creature. The Creator has attributes of divinity that he shares with no one or nothing in creation (incommunicable characteristics): he changes not, he is invisible, he is eternal, self-sufficient, simple (without parts), and so forth. The Mormon doctrine of God does not make these essential distinctions. Remember the Mormon quote, “Man and God are of the same race?” Remember the Mormon doctrine that God has an exalted body? Remember the Mormon teaching that the Father had a Father had a Father had a Father (*ad infinitum*)? These teachings are clearly unbiblical and outside the bounds of historic Christianity. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible teaches *exactly opposite* of Mormon doctrine of God ([Numbers 23:19](#), [1 Samuel 15:29](#), [Malachi 3:6](#)). When the Bible speaks about “gods” they are “gods” that belong to the created order of things that came into existence (either by idol imaginations or Satan’s minions) at creation. This is one of many basic, deep, and irreconcilable differences between Mormonism and Christianity.

Along the same lines is the Mormon teaching that God progresses. Mormon apostle Orson Pratt said that God progresses in knowledge and power. As we have already seen several times, this is clearly a display that Mormonism denies the Creator/creature distinction. In broader circles today that call themselves Christian, this is also called Open Theism (or Openness Theology) that Greg Boyd, Clark Pinnock, and others have recently advocated. The Mormon view of progression and Open Theism are like Apollo and Artemis — twins. God doesn’t fully know the future, but he learns and develops to some extent as he goes. God knows future possibilities, but not future actualities.

This is a detailed discussion, to be sure, but suffice it to say that Christian theologians have been writing against different sorts of Open Theism (and philosophies that teach God progresses) for hundreds of years. If God progresses in knowledge, he is no longer omniscient (all-knowing). One Mormon reviewer of Clark Pinnock’s book *Most Moved Mover* wrote, “It is not hard to see how Pinnock’s open model of deity resonates with common Latter-day Saint understandings of God. It is not, of course, a perfect mesh, yet clearly we do have much in common.” This is dangerous company: Mormon theology has found common

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

ground with a heresy in the broader Christian arena (Open Theism) that teaches that God does not fully know the future. This is anathema to the historic Christian church.

One other significant and irreconcilable difference between Mormonism and historic Christianity is the doctrine of the Trinity. Some Mormons will attack the Council of Nicaea (and our Nicene Creed) as being an addition to apostolic doctrine, as if the doctrine of the Trinity was foisted on the Christian church by later teachers and preachers. Mormons clearly deny the doctrine of the Trinity — the biblical teaching that there is one God in three persons. They will say that there are three gods, but they are different and not of the same substance. The historic Christian church follows the OT and NT by confessing the truth that there is one divine being who exists in three distinct persons. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Spirit is Lord yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord. The historic Christian church teaches that if a person does not believe in the Trinity, he is not a Christian.

Mormon Terms and Worldview

Keeping in mind what we have just learned about Mormon theology, it is important for us to briefly note how they use terms. Mormons will look you in the eye and say “I love Jesus.” “I believe in God.” “I believe in the Holy Ghost.” “I go to church” and other such phrases. However, we must remember what stands behind these words. When a Christian says “I love Jesus” he means “I love the eternal Son of God, who is God-in-the-flesh, who is equal to and one with the Father and the Spirit.” When a Mormon says, “I love Jesus” he means “I love Jesus who is one of the gods, Satan’s spirit-brother, who was saved by faithfulness and only perfectly revealed to me by Joseph Smith.” Again, these two are as irreconcilable as heaven and hell. Notice at the outset of worldview discussion, even the terms “creation” and “fall” mean totally different things: in Mormonism create means “with existing things” while Christians say “without existing things.” The fall for Mormons isn’t really so bad; the fall for Christians means sin and hell.

Even deeper and down to the heart of the matter, we compare worldviews. The Mormon worldview and the Christian worldview are as different as night and day, as opposite as ice and fire, as opposite as Pharaoh and Yahweh. If one evaluates the Mormon worldview with a larger view of history, it becomes clear that Mormonism is *nothing less than an American repackaging of ancient Greek pagan polytheism*. That is a heavy and weighty accusation: I make it weightier still by saying that Mormonism is Greek paganism wrapped in an American flag. Let me explain.

The ancient Greeks (before and after the time of Christ) believed that there were many gods. We read of some of them in the New Testament: Zeus, Hermes, Artemis, and so forth. In fact, in ancient Greece there was a pantheon of gods — gods of sexual

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

reproduction, gods of war, and gods of harvest (much like Egypt in the OT). The Greek worldview consisted of myths, such as gods giving birth, gods having sex, and gods having fathers. Furthermore, in ancient Greece, people could become gods. *"We have no king but Caesar"* ([John 19:15](#)) is another way to say, "Caesar is Lord": both are expressions that a human ruler is equivalent or nearly equivalent to the gods. Greek warriors could attain divinity (progress) by prowess and dominance on the battlefield. These are but a few examples of Greek polytheism.

18

Though in a different way, Mormonism has the same basic view of the Greeks: there are many gods; gods give birth, gods have sex, and people can become gods. However, Mormons have taken the Greco-Roman flavor out of this and garbed it with American family values — be moral, patriotic, and have a nice family. Mormons will display their morality of a husband-wife-children family with the red, white, and blue in the Fourth of July Parade. They have also dressed it with American spirituality: there is a God, and he loves you and forgives you, if you just try really hard and be sincere; trust and obey is the way to heaven. If you really, really, *really* believe it in your heart, it has to be true, and God rewards that. God has told you by his Spirit, so no one can question this unmediated internal voice. What right do you have to violate my right of having a whisper and feeling in my heart?

Even more American is the Joseph F. Smith's declaration: In accord with the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, we teach that the Garden of Eden was on the American continent located where the city of Zion, or the New Jerusalem will be built. When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden, they eventually dwelt at a place called Adam-ondi-Ahman, situated in what is now Daviess County, Missouri.

Clearly, the beginning and end (creation and eschatology) are Americanized in Mormonism, along with theology, anthropology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. Christianity, however, *"is not a Western religion. It has taken more culturally diverse forms than other faiths,"* as Timothy Keller has noted. Or, in blunt terms, Christianity doesn't need Western culture — or America — to thrive, nor is Western culture the birth-mother of Christianity. Christianity doesn't need a nation's flag at all.

Furthermore, one of the tenets of ancient Greece was the concept of a ladder of being. That is, there is one ladder of being, and all moral agents are on that ladder. The gods are at the top, and really wicked people are at the bottom. A person can get up that ladder in a few ways: intellect/philosophy, obedience to the gods, and/or overcoming a test. Mormonism has the same tenets: there is no Creator/creature distinction. Instead, there is one chain of being ("man and God are of the same race") where the best are at the top and the worst are at the bottom. To get to the top of the being-ladder you have to "trust and obey." God the Father did it, Jesus did it, and we can do it to. This is quite American

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

as well — God is a mascot to give us what we want. He is pretty much like us, only a lot bigger and stronger. If we are like him, we'll fare quite well.

One more similarity sticks out. An ancient Greek philosopher named Heraclites (d. c.475 BC) taught that there is no "being." Instead, there is only becoming. His basic premise for being was that you can't step in the same river twice — all things are always fluxing and progressing in being. Mormonism says an American "yes!" to that principle of progression. We can conquer and "progress" to overcome the Wild West. God progressed, Jesus progresses, we progress, Scripture progresses in continuing prophecy, and doctrines can flux and change in progression. This progression is also bathed in American moralism or modern day Pelagianism: try harder; you can do it, and God will certainly bless you right on into the big becoming future.

Opening the Door to Apologetics (Defending the Faith)

Though we do not have the space to fully deal with all apologetic issues — many good books have already done so — it is important to open the door of talking to Mormons. Utilizing the presuppositional approach to apologetics, we can show the impossibility of the contrary from Christianity. In other words, *only the historic, biblical Christian worldview and doctrine can account for the way things are*. All other positions end up in futility and absurdity, which has been shown above. Though Christianity has tremendous mysteries (secret things) that we will never figure out, the clear things of Scripture (revealed things) are not illogical (cf. [Deuteronomy 29:29](#)). Let me use just two examples to encourage the reader to think along these lines and go further.

- First, *Mormon theology cannot account for time*. This is another weighty claim, yet ponder it for a moment. If matter is eternal, there never can be a "before time began." If intelligence or some sort of material principle is co-eternal with God, our concept of time cannot stand. For time to be time it needs a beginning. You cannot measure periods of time unless there was a first. Every tick of the clock begs for a beginning. Only Christianity can account for the tick and tock of your clock. In creation *ex nihilo*, Christianity teaches that time began when God created the world. God is outside of time — timeless — but he created it and steps into it in the person of his eternal Son. This is one thing to press upon your Mormon friends.
- Second, *Mormon theology cannot account for the weeds in your garden*. If the fall was a fall upward, what is a weed in the garden? A good thing? What is the toil and sweat of man's brow, working simply to exist? Christianity teaches that this is part of the curse; Mormonism teaches this is part of some sort of fall upwards. How can toil and sweat and weeds be a blessed thing? Adam's fall

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

plunged the earth itself into bondage: weeds remind us of that cosmic curse that will one day be removed by Christ when he ushers in the new heavens and earth, where we need not toil against it anymore. This is another clear inconsistency in Mormonism that we cannot let slide as we talk to Mormons.

I encourage the reader to think not primarily about superficial parts of the Mormon faith, since the superficial aspects can be fudged and equivocated to mean nearly anything, even Christian lingo. Dig deeper; see the “nuts and bolts” of Mormonism, how they are opposed to Christianity, and use Mormonism’s own teachings to show that it cannot account for reality. Indeed, as we see, Mormonism is so completely illogical that it cannot stand on its own two feet. To be duped into Mormonism is to be duped into a self-destructing, irrational religion. One reason people are duped is because of the clean clothes Mormonism dresses itself in. If something looks good on the outside and is enjoyable or beneficial for a person, he’ll go for it, even if it is quite irrational. This is why Americans purchase on credit.

Conclusion

The evidence is more than abundantly clear: *Mormonism is opposite of Christianity*. By no stretch of any dictionary entry on any term can we lump the Latter Day Saints church in with historic Christian churches. Christians do, however, need to be quite aware of the current cultural trends. Even the media at times are quick to lump Mormons in with Christian churches. I recently saw an article floating around the Internet praising Mormons for how they store up goods for times of crisis. Certainly, Mormons attempt to call themselves Christians, though they didn’t in the past. I have been repetitive above so the main point would be quite obvious — the gulf between the two is impassible and unbridgeable.

Their missionaries will look you in the eye and say “We’re Christians too; I believe in Jesus and accepted him into my heart; the Holy Spirit told me.” This is evangelical language, to be sure, but underneath the language is a world of darkness, a world that many have been sucked into by crafty language. The serpent still twists God’s words — we’re dealing not with two competing or complementary religions, but the war between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s. We know who won and will win. He will protect his church from false teaching and heresies, even those as dark as Mormonism. He is also powerful to pull people out of such darkness and show them the light of Jesus Christ, who is one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Let me end with just a few exhortations. First, the issue at hand needs to awaken the Christian church to know what she believes and why she believes it. Doctrine is important: each Christian is called to *stand fast in* and *hold fast to* biblical teaching (2

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Thessalonians 2:15](#)). This means we need to *know* Christian doctrine more than just superficially, because “superficially” Mormonism sounds the same. Second, Christians have to be ready more than ever to be called intolerant, bigoted, narrow-minded, and so forth as we continue to refuse to call Mormons Christians. We need to be ready to respond to such accusations with informed truth and love instead of running away angry, with our fingers in our ears. Third, we need to pray for the deceived Mormons. We need to support mission endeavors to the Mormons; we need to befriend them and lovingly show them the truth and light of the gospel that refutes and exposes their darkness. Finally, we need to hit our knees and praise the eternal Son of God that he has rescued us from our own darkness. He *still* rescues all kinds of people from all kinds of places from such darkness. All this study should lead us to look away from ourselves to the light of the world, Jesus.

© Christian Study Library, *The Outlook*, 2011. Retrieved July 20, 2023.

<https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/latter-day-saints-summary-and-evaluation-mormonism#outline-the-book-of-mormon>

NOTE: This post is in compliance with the Fair Use clause of the US Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S. Code § 107). The US Supreme Court has issued several major decisions clarifying and reaffirming the fair use doctrine since the 1980s, most recently in the 2021 decision *Google LLC v. Oracle America, Inc.*