

Is Jesus the Only Redeemer? In Mormonism, It Depends.

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In the April 2022 issue of the LDS magazine *For the Strength of Youth*, president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Russell M. Nelson, commented,

“Jesus Christ’s [Atonement](#) was infinite. He [saved](#) all humankind from never-ending death. He suffered intensely, beyond what any mortal could suffer. His suffering was for all people existing on an infinite number of worlds created by Him (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:24; Moses 1:33).” (Russell M. Nelson, “Jesus Christ is Your Savior,” *For the Strength of Youth*, April 2022)



Tuck that away for a moment and consider the teachings of the LDS church’s second prophet, Brigham Young. During the church’s general conference in October 1854, he spoke about the redemption of people who occupy worlds other than our own:

“Let me open the eyes of your understanding.

“There has never been a time when the creations of worlds commenced, they are from eternity to eternity in their creations and redemption. After they are organized they experience the good and the evil; the light and the dark, the bitter and the sweet, as you and I do...

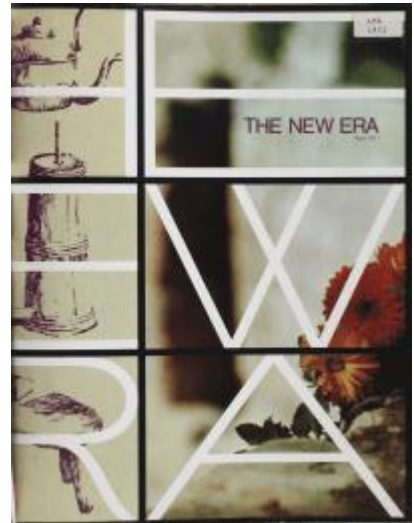
“Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve: named so, simply because the first man is always called Adam, and the first woman Eve; and the Oldest Son has always had the privilege of being Ordained, Appointed and Called to be the Heir of the Family, if he does not rebel against the Father, and he is the Saviour of the family. Every world that has been created, has been created upon the same principle.” (Brigham Young, “For This Is Life Eternal,” General Conference, October 8, 1854, *The Teachings of President Brigham Young*, 3:353-354)

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At first reading it may seem like President Nelson and President Young are at odds with one another. Did Jesus atone for the sins of all people on an infinite number of worlds as President Nelson taught? Or does each world have its own oldest-son Savior as Brigham Young taught? In Mormonism both could be true, and here's why.

President Nelson's comments included the caveat that Jesus' atonement covered all people on an infinite number of worlds "*created by Him.*" While Brigham Young's teaching is broader, including worlds created throughout the entirety of eternity. This includes worlds created by Gods other than the Savior of *this* earth.

The April 1971 issue of another official LDS magazine, *The New Era*, addressed this topic in some detail. The following excerpt is lengthy, but packed with classical Mormon doctrine — the [gospel according to Mormonism](#):



"This insight of the gospel [from the first chapter of the book of Moses, an LDS book of scripture] into the subject of outer space is what makes the whole subject meaningful. When you look up into the heavens at night and see the countless numbers of stars, it is easy to imagine other people 'out there' being tested and tried and experiencing struggles and joys somewhat similar to those we are going through. But the most exciting thing about this whole basic and fundamental concept is that it is true. Totally and completely true. People growing, developing, and finding fulfillment — out there!

"The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: 'God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man. ... he was once a man like us ... God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth. ...' [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345-346]

"If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and ... God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. ... And where was there ever a father without first being a son? ... If Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that *He* had a Father also? ... He [Jesus] laid down His life, and took it up, the same as His Father had done before.' [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 373]

"Long before our God began his creations, he dwelt on a mortal world like ours, one of the creations that his Father had created for him and his brethren. He, with many of his brethren, was obedient to the principles of the eternal gospel. One among these, it is presumed, was a savior for them, and through him they obtained a resurrection and an [exaltation](#) on an eternal, celestial world [see Brigham

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Young, [Journal of Discourses 14:71](#)]. Then they gained the power and [godhood](#) of their Father and were made heirs of all that he had, continuing his works and creating worlds of their own for their own posterity—the same as their Father had done before, and his Father, and his Father, [and on and on...](#)

“Nothing is more basic in the restored gospel than these truths that, because of recent events of space travel, are so timely. The great hope of the gospel for us is that we may come to a oneness with our Lord and our Father and partake of this same work and glory and godhood. Being joint-heirs of all that the Father has, we may then look forward to using those powers to organize still other worlds from the unorganized matter that exists throughout boundless space. Creating other worlds, peopling them with our own eternal posterity, providing a savior for them, and making known to them the saving principles of the eternal gospel, that they may have the same experiences we are now having and be exalted with us in their turn—this is eternal life.” (Kent Nelson, “People on Other Worlds,” *The New Era*, April 1971. Except for the last instance, ellipses in the original.)



Therefore, considering Mormonism’s unique definition of “eternal life” in that, those who achieve it will have power for “creating other worlds, peopling them with our own eternal posterity, providing a savior for them, and making known to them the saving principles of the eternal gospel,” we can see that President Nelson and President Young are not directly contradicting one another. In the LDS faith, Jesus is the Redeemer for those who live on the worlds *He* created, while *other* Redeemers take care of the worlds *others* created. Indeed, according to Mormonism, you yourself, Latter-day Saint, may one day provide the Redeemer for your own eternal posterity.

It strikes me that while President Nelson’s recent praise of [Jesus Christ](#) and His atonement sounds [almost](#) Christian, putting it into the larger context of Mormonism’s historic teachings exposes it as being far from biblical. Set against the Bible’s one true God, Mormonism proclaims [many true Gods](#). Set against the Bible’s one and only Redeemer, Mormonism proclaims many Redeemers. So even though President Nelson speaks of Christ’s atonement being for all humankind—for all people, on an infinite number of worlds—in the fuller picture that encompasses Mormonism’s idea of “eternal life,” Christ’s atonement is perhaps just a drop in the bucket.

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“How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods and worlds, and when men were not passing through the same ordeals that we are now passing through. That course has been from all eternity, and it is and will be to all eternity.”

(Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 7:333)

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.’”

[Isaiah 44:6](#)

Sharon Lindbloom has loved and served the Lord Jesus Christ since 1979. Though never a Mormon, Sharon’s interest in Mormonism — and her great love for the Mormon people — began in 1987 when a family member started investigating The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This led Sharon to study Mormonism through reading the Mormon scriptures as well as the writings of LDS prophets and apostles. Sharon’s research led her to become the director of a Minnesota-based outreach ministry to Mormons. She served in this capacity for 18 years before joining the staff of Mormonism Research Ministry as the moderator of MRM’s blogsite, [Mormon Coffee](#). In 2016 MRM traded Mormon Coffee for Sharon’s regular website feature, [Mormonism in the News](#). She continues to serve prayerfully with MRM as a full-time volunteer lay-apologist. Sharon and her husband, Bruce, live in the Minneapolis area. They have been blessed with two daughters, Allison and Dana, and six grandchildren.

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