

Questions for Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses Concerning Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Gospel

When Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses come to your door, they will be prepared with questions that lead you to doubt your faith and see theirs as either reasonable (Jehovah's Witnesses) or new and better (Mormons). Don't allow them to lead the conversation. Rather, thank them for coming and tell them you have some questions for them. As they provide answers, be sure to ask them the *sources* of their answers and then graciously share what you believe the Bible teaches.

Concerning Jesus:

1. Where did Jesus come from?

- Mormons: He began as we all did – as an eternally existing intelligence.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: He was the first of God's creations – created as Michael the Archangel.
- The Bible: Jesus is the uncreated Creator. He has always existed and is unique with the Father and Holy Spirit as the only eternal beings existing as the Triune Godhead.

2. Is Jesus God, the second Person of the Trinity?

- Mormons: Yes. However, Joseph Smith taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three gods. Mormons also teach that their "Trinity" makes up the Godhead for *our* world only; there are millions of other gods throughout the universe, including millions of potential gods on earth (including you).
- Jehovah's Witnesses: Jesus is not God and the Trinity is a satanic doctrine. Jesus is "mighty god" but not "Almighty God."
- The Bible: Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity, which may be defined as the one true and living God who exists as three distinct, co-equal, co-eternal Persons.

3. Why did Jesus die?

- Mormons: To provide salvation for all mankind (meaning resurrection) and to pay for Adam's sin. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection made it possible for mankind to be resurrected, but "men will be punished for their own sins" (Article of Faith #2 by Joseph Smith).
- Jehovah's Witnesses: Jesus was a "ransom to God for Adam's sin." He made it possible for all people to be saved by obedience to Jehovah. He died on a torture stake, not a cross.
- The Bible: Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. On the cross Jesus, who was sinless, became sin for us and bore the penalty of our sins so we can be saved by God's grace through faith in Him.

4. Where is Jesus now?

- Mormons: Jesus rose from the dead and is in heaven today, awaiting His return, the resurrection and final judgment of all mankind. (Brigham Young taught that Joseph Smith will "receive the keys of the resurrection" and that "every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, Junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are.")

- Jehovah's Witnesses: Jesus the man ceased to exist at his death. Jehovah recreated his life form into an exalted Michael the Archangel, who returned invisibly to earth in 1914 and is establishing Jehovah's kingdom on earth, which will come to its fullness at the battle of Armageddon.
- The Bible: Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He is seated because the work of redemption was completed in His death, burial and resurrection. He will return one day physically and visibly, resurrect and judge all people.

Concerning the Holy Spirit:

1. Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

- Mormons: Yes. According to some, he is a spirit person awaiting "mortal probation" during which he will take on a body. According to others, there is a distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost; the Spirit is a person and the Ghost is a force.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: No. The holy spirit is an "invisible act or force" that Jehovah uses to inspire His servants to accomplish His will.
- The Bible: Yes. He is the third Person of the Trine Godhead and the Bible describes Him with personal characteristics – for example, He may be lied to and grieved.

2. Is the Holy Spirit God?

- Mormons: Yes. He is the third person of the Mormon concept of the Trinity.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: No. The spirit is an impersonal force.
- The Bible: Yes. He is the third Person of the Triune Godhead.

3. What is the Spirit's ministry today?

- Mormons: Some say he is waiting to take on a mortal body. Others describe the spirit as an impersonal force God uses to carry out His purposes.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: The spirit is an "invisible act of force" that Jehovah uses to inspire His servants to accomplish His will.
- The Bible: The Spirit has a ministry to believers and to unbelievers. To believers, He regenerates them, seals them, indwells them, comforts them, convicts them of sins, gives them spiritual gifts, and helps them understand God's Word. To unbelievers, He convinces them of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:7-11).

4. Where did the Holy Spirit come from?

- Mormons: He always existed. He began as we all did, as an eternally existing intelligence.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: The spirit always existed as Jehovah's invisible "act or force."
- The Bible: He always existed as the third Person of the Triune Godhead.

Concerning the Gospel:

1. How may a person receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life?

- Mormons: Everyone will be resurrected and receive eternal life in one of six places because of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. To attain the highest level of heaven, however, a person must pay for his own sins (baptism is for the remission of sins) and be faithful to Mormon teachings.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: Requirements for salvation are "exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice," baptism by immersion, active association with the Watchtower society, righteous conduct, and absolute loyalty to Jehovah.
- The Bible: A person receives forgiveness of sins and eternal life by God's grace through faith alone in Christ. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection satisfied God's justice and extended to all mankind His grace and mercy. No works are required or accepted.

2. Where does a person go at death?

- Mormons: Some go to Paradise, others to Prison where they hear the Mormon gospel and await others on earth to be baptized on their behalf. Ultimately, all will be resurrected and sent to one of six places, including the highest level of the celestial kingdom (godhood).
- Jehovah's Witnesses: 144,000 go to heaven, where they will remain forever. The rest go into a state of soul sleep, where they await resurrection and final judgment.
- The Bible: The souls/spirits of men and women continue to exist after death. Christians who die go directly into the presence of Christ in heaven and await resurrection when they will receive glorified bodies. Unbelievers who die go to Torment in Hades and await resurrection and final judgment, at which time they will be cast into hell.

3. Will people live forever?

- Mormons: Yes. Based on their response to Mormon teachings, they will spend eternity in one of six places: 1) outer darkness (reserved for Satan and his demons and the extremely wicked, including apostate Mormons); 2) telestial kingdom (the lowest of the three heavens; the wicked will spend eternity here); 3) terrestrial kingdom (the second of the three heavens; honorable people and "lukewarm" Mormons will live here); and 4-6) celestial kingdom (the highest of the three heavens consisting of three separate levels; the top level is where Mormons hope to be exalted).
- Jehovah's Witnesses: Some will and some will not. The 144,000 will live forever in heaven; the "other sheep" will dwell on Paradise Earth; and the wicked will be annihilated after their resurrection and final judgment.
- The Bible: Yes. All people will spend eternity either in the presence of God (in heaven now and on the new earth after Jesus returns and brings the throne of God to the New Jerusalem) or apart from God in hell.

4. What does it mean to believe?

- Mormons: To have faith in God and His prophets – particularly Joseph Smith, whom God used to restore true Christianity. Faith requires actions that lead to individual salvation – for example, baptism for the remission of sins.
- Jehovah's Witnesses: To “exercise faith,” meaning a combination of belief and works, resulting in the hope of a future life on Paradise Earth (only the 144,000 are in heaven).
- The Bible: To have faith in God; to trust Him and His promises. It is belief in Jesus alone that leads to forgiveness of sins and eternal life. While good works will naturally follow conversion, good works cannot pay for our sins or merit eternal life. Salvation is God's gift, provided through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.