

## CHRISTIANS, MORMONS, PROPHETS, CHRISTMAS

YOU KNOW A MORMON. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SAY?

**The “Christian” Question.** In [p.s. #7](#), we looked at the question, “Are Mormons Christians?” We noted that the Mormon church itself raises the question, and answers, predictably, “Yes! Of course we are!” Often offended by the question, Mormons profess vigorously that they are Christians.

Is this question worth debating with a Mormon friend or relative? Is it useful when you chat with a Mormon?

**The Kolob Curio.** In [p.s. #6](#) we looked briefly at “The Book of Abraham,” part of the Mormon scripture canon. According to the Mormon church: •Kolob is a star near God’s throne—just one of many mysterious details about the universe God revealed to Abraham. •Abraham’s hieroglyphs recorded on papyrus were discovered and translated by Joseph Smith in the nineteenth century.

Is fascination and speculation about astronomical unknowns unacceptable for true Christians? Is Kolob worth discussing with a Mormon acquaintance?

**The Jesus and Joseph holiday season.** In our [December 2009 “Pastors’ Perspective!”](#) you can read two short paragraphs (“Mormons: Jesus Born in April”). Also see an item in our [December 2008 “Pastors’ Perspective!”](#): “In December: Joseph Smith and Jesus Christ.”

The date, even the month, of Christ’s birth is unsettled among Christians. Is it worthwhile to speculate and argue with Mormons about their date for His birth? The “Perspective!” links, above, illustrate the role of Mormon prophets; hence—

**The prophet problem.** Mormon religion started with a youngster’s visions and stories. After 10 years Joseph Smith became the Mormon church’s first prophet. The religion continues under successive prophets. According to them, the conversion of others begins with the thought that the Book of Mormon just might be true Christian scripture; therefore Joseph Smith might really be God’s prophet for these “latter days,” and the church he founded, a true Christian church.

A basic requirement for conversion to Mormonism is the profession that Joseph Smith, his book, and his church are true.

If you have read the last two links above, you have seen: •“He [Joseph Smith] gave us everything.” •Without the Book of Mormon “[W]e have [no religion].” •Smith is the “unparalleled...great testifier of the Father and the Son.” •Mormons should seek “a personal witness of him [Smith]” and should busy themselves with telling others about him.

What is a useful one-on-one Christian response?

### RESPONDING

Obviously Mormon differences with Christians are more than birthdays and prophets, the right to define “Christian,” or

the mysteries of the universe. The interesting and sometimes amusing curiosities of Mormon religion can obscure serious doctrinal differences re God, man, sin, and salvation; and the Bible vis-à-vis modern prophets. We focus there. To illustrate—

“**Christian.**” When given the chance many Mormons can recite a convincing statement about Christ, and there’s no doubt they try to live what might be considered a “Christian life.” Unfortunately, considering Mormon hymns, scriptures, and pronouncements of the religion’s past and present leaders, Mormon tenets are clearly unchristian—even anti-Christian.

To boil it down, they are saying, “We are Christians, no matter what we believe. It’s close enough to what you believe; so, why worry?” If you haven’t read it yet, read [p.s. #7](#).

**Consider Kolob.** Odd doctrine? Yes. But Kolob is not the issue. The issue is “The Book of Abraham.” Other matters raised by this pseudo scripture are far more important. Errors include: belief in creation by “the Gods,” prophets and new scriptures in modern days, and revelations by dreams and mysterious interviews with ancient biblical characters. Please read [p.s. #6](#).

**Consider Christmas.** What’s important? Not the date. Mormons celebrate a December Christmas and the new year with familiar carols, greetings, decorations, and other customs, even though they “know” and teach their children that Christ was born on April 6 (“know,” because their prophet said so). Typically Mormons take little note of their April “Christmas.”

However, December is a good time to talk to a Mormon. If you missed the opportunity in 2013, you can mention the Mormon Tabernacle Choir to a Mormon friend anytime. It performs beautifully throughout the year as well as seasonally on public radio and TV—reasonable, year-round, non-threatening opportunities to initiate conversations about Christ.

### MORE SUGGESTIONS

**Questions.** Honest, earnest questions can help in your chat with Mormons—not trick or offensive questions. Listen to their answers, but be alert.

- What has your prophet revealed recently, in, say, the past year—or five years? That is, what Christian truth do you think I am lacking because I don’t follow the Mormon prophet?

- Why do you think your church keeps insisting that it is Christian? Why might people think otherwise? Other churches don’t have to explain that they’re Christian; why does yours?

- I know Mormons often say that they are misunderstood. What do you think I might misunderstand?

- What doctrinal differences do you (or other Mormons) have with conservative, evangelical Christians? Do you believe that your church is the only true church, as I’ve heard it said?

- How can sinners—like us—gain eternal life, and be sure of it even now? I am confident that God has freely given me eternal life. Is that possible for Mormons? What do Mormons have to do to gain eternal life? How are you doing?

**Essential, biblical truths.** Read [MOQ 20-2](#), “The Big Picture: the Mormon view of life.” Listed there are important truths from Romans: sin, justification by faith, imputed righteousness, God’s boundless grace, apart from our best efforts. Testify!