

# The Mormons You Know

## Who Are They, Anyway? <sup>1</sup>

As a Christian, you are right to be concerned about Mormons (or LDS, i.e., Latter-day Saints). They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, yes, but what are that church's doctrines? And, most importantly, are Mormons saved? Let's look.

### WHAT IS MORMON DOCTRINE?

You can read the article yourself if you like, but here's the gist of the problem from a Mormon point of view.<sup>2</sup>

- Some doctrines are essential for salvation. Among them are faith, repentance, and baptism.
- Some non-essential doctrines simply flesh out essential doctrines.
- Policies, which are authoritative and binding, implement essential and non-essential doctrines.
- "Esoteric doctrines" might have been known by prophets or taught by the church in the past, but are no longer operative.

### ARE MORMONS SAVED?

As with Mormon doctrine (it depends on what is meant by the word *doctrine*), Mormon salvation depends on what is meant by the word *saved*. In a rambling address to scores of thousands of LDS church members, a church authority, Dallin Oaks, outlined possibilities for salvation from a Mormon point of view.<sup>3</sup> He said Mormons have "at least six different meanings" for the words *saved* and *salvation*. Here are highlights:

- Are we saved? "...[O]ur answer will be either 'yes' or 'yes, but with conditions.'"
- All mortals will have a physical, resurrected existence. Essentially all will live forever in "a kingdom of glory in the world to come."
- Only those who obey "the laws and ordinances of the Gospel"—meaning they have been born again "at the hands of those having authority [are] saved from sin *conditionally*," but not conclusively unless they meet other requirements throughout their mortal lives.
- Eternal life, also called *exaltation* or the *fulness of salvation* by Mormons, requires more: "...making of sacred covenants, including eternal marriage, in the temples of God..." Even then no

one can be confident of eternal life until a determination is made on Judgment Day.

### WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES LDS YOUTH

In *New Era*, its official magazine for youth, the LDS church spells out its answer to the saved by grace/saved by works argument.<sup>4</sup> It begins by citing the church's "Articles of Faith," a part of their modern-day scripture canon: salvation can be achieved "by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." Christ made it possible; now it's up to you to obey the rules (the unspecified "laws and ordinances").

- First paragraph: Works are "the things we must do," and God's grace is "the help or strength he gives us."
- By doing our best to live righteously we "qualify for the gift of salvation."
- "We don't earn salvation," but we receive that gift "if we do our part."
- If we have faith, repent, get "baptized and receive other ordinances, and faithfully endure to the end...we are promised eternal life through the grace of God."

### THE CHURCH TEACHES SINGLES & CHILDLESS:

"...(N)ot all of [God's] children will have the opportunity to be married in this life. He has promised that all those who accept the gospel and strive to honor their covenants will have the opportunity to be married and have children either in this life or the next."<sup>5</sup>

Living Mormons execute marriages in their temples as proxies for the dead. Eventually the deceased can reproduce or receive the children of others assigned to them under LDS church authority.

**Mormonism is a religion of uncertainty about salvation, urging lifelong striving and a wish for God's approval at a final, universal judgment.**

**Dallin Oaks, cited above, taught Mormons that they and virtually everyone will live in glory (be saved) no matter who they are or how they live, but with great effort they might gain more glory.**

**Oaks' premise: Christians might ask, "Are you saved?" Mormons can say "yes," maybe.**

### HAVE YOU ASKED? HAVE YOU TOLD THE GOOD NEWS?

**NOTES** <sup>1</sup>Related MOQ info: <http://tinyurl.com/yc2spexm> Also, search other published resources at [Immanuel Bible Church](#) <sup>2</sup>About LDS "doctrine": <http://tinyurl.com/y8dkylrd> <sup>3</sup>About LDS "salvation": <http://tinyurl.com/ybk8kg7l> <sup>4</sup>By grace or works—or both? <http://tinyurl.com/ou5qrac> <sup>5</sup>Marriage & children for the dead: <http://tinyurl.com/ybekhnt5> and <http://tinyurl.com/y6wzwt6ts>