

Jesus: The God

Two doctrines that more than any others separate evangelical Christianity from many of the other world religions:

- justification by grace alone through faith alone
- the Trinity, particularly that Jesus is fully/eternally God yet there is only one God

Mormonism

"The divinity of Jesus Christ is the core doctrine of the church. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the promised Messiah, and the mediator between God and His children. . . . 'We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins (2 Nephi 25:26).'" (from the public booklet distributed when new temples are introduced)

But:

- Jesus was the child of heavenly father/mother who was once a normal human being like us, progressed to godhood, then came to this earth as savior
- Jesus is certainly not the only God, but is a god

1 - "God the Father had a plurality of wives, one or more being in eternity, by whom He begat our spirits as well as the spirit of Jesus His First Born." (one of the original Twelve Apostles, Orson Pratt, *The Seer*)

2 - "Jesus kept the commandments of his father and thereby worked out his own salvation, and also set an example as to the way and the means whereby all men may be saved." (Apostle Bruce McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*)

3 - "Christ the Word, the Firstborn, had of course attained unto the status of Godhood while yet in preexistence." (McConkie, *What Mormons Think of Christ*)

4 - "By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state." (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*)

Islam

"Muslims respect and revere Jesus, and await His second coming."

But:

- Jesus was a man just like us and one of God's many messengers to mankind
- He was not the Son of God, the true God, or a god of any sort

1 - "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is that of Adam: he created him from dust, and then he said to him 'Be': and he was." Sura 3:59

2 - "Pagans indeed are those who say that GOD is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah himself said, "O Children of Israel, you shall worship GOD; my Lord and your Lord." Anyone who sets up any idol beside GOD, GOD has forbidden Paradise for him, and his destiny is Hell. The wicked have no helpers. Pagans indeed are those who say that GOD is a third of a trinity. There is no god except the one god.... The Messiah, son of Mary, is no more than a messenger like the messengers before him." Sura 5:72-75

What if they don't respect the authority of the Bible?

Is Jesus the Yahweh (Jehovah) of the Old Testament?

Hebrew *Yahweh* - sometimes said "Jehovah" - often translated as LORD.

Is Jesus Yahweh?

Isaiah 40:3 *A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for Yahweh.'*

- Matt. 3:1, 3 *John the Baptist came ... this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make ready the way of the Lord."' (Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23)*

Is 45:18, 23 *For thus says Yahweh ... to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.*

Phil. 2:10-11 *That at the name of Jesus every knee will bow ... and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Is. 8:12-13 *You are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is Yahweh of hosts whom you should regard as holy.*

I Peter 3:13-15 *And do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.*

What is the relationship between Yahweh and "God" (Elohim) in the Old Testament?

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth.*

Psalms 100:3 *Know that Yahweh Himself is God; it is He who has made us.*

Exodus 3:15 *God, furthermore, said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.*

Exodus 6:3 *I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Yahweh, I did not make Myself known to them.*

I Samuel 4:4: *So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh of hosts who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.*

Yahweh is the God of the Old Testament, the creator God of Genesis 1:1

Deuteronomy 4:32-35, 39 *Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know that Yahweh, He is God; there is no other besides Him.... Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that Yahweh, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.*

Deuteronomy 32:19, 20, 39 *Yahweh saw this ... then He said ... See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me.*

II Sam. 22:31-32 *As for God, His way is blameless; The word of Yahweh is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. For who is God, besides Yahweh? And who is a rock, besides our God?*

Is. 40:3 *A voice is calling, "Clear the way for Yahweh in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."*

Is 41:4 *I, Yahweh, am the first, and with the last, I am he.*

Is. 43:10-11 *You are my witnesses, declares Yahweh.... Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.*

Is. 44:6-8 *Thus says Yahweh, 'I and the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.... Is there any God besides Me?'*

Is. 45:5-6, 18, 22 *I am Yahweh, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God... That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am Yahweh, and there is no other.... For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), "I am Yahweh, and there is none else.... Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other."*

Is. 46:9 *Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,*

Yahweh, Elohim, and Mormonism

Early Mormonism: Yahweh/Jehovah is Elohim, the God of Israel

Later Mormonism: Yahweh/Jehovah is Jesus, Elohim is the Father

"Elohim, as understood and used in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, is the name-title of God the Eternal Father, whose firstborn Son in the spirit is Jehovah[Yahweh] -- the Only Begotten in the flesh, Jesus Christ." (Apostle James Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*)
President Joseph Fielding Smith said "Among the spirit children of Elohim the firstborn was and is Jehovah[Yahweh] or Jesus Christ."

Two problems they created:

1. Later Mormon apostles seem to contradict earlier Mormon apostles
2. Mormon doctrine contradicts the Old Testament

Three ways to handle it:

1. Shrug.
2. Claim the Bible is erroneous.
3. Try to explain, and accidentally admit that your doctrine is completely unbiblical:

"Since this terminology [Jesus = Jehovah, Elohim = the Father] was not standardized for convenience and clarity prior to the twentieth century, readers are cautioned not to expect the early writings of the Church to always reflect this practice, which arose only decades later. Likewise, attempting to read the Bible as if its writers followed the same modern practice is anachronistic, and may lead to confusion and misinterpretation."

(http://en.fairmormon.org/Nature_of_God/Elohim_and_Jehovah)