

Religion Profile

MORMONS

In 1820 Joseph Smith became concerned over which church he should join, since there were so many denominations. He claimed that while he was outdoors praying, he was visited by God and Jesus. They informed him that all other religions were corrupt, and that Smith was being charged as a prophet to restore the true gospel to the world.

An angel named Moroni appeared to Smith in 1827 and helped him find a set of gold plates. These plates had a message inscribed on them, which could only be translated by a huge pair of spectacles called the "Urim and Thummim." Only Joseph Smith could use these glasses to translate the tablets. What he translated from them became the basis for the Book of Mormon, the official bible of the Mormon church. Smith later started preaching the message he had received and attracted many followers.

Today the Mormon church has over 7 million members worldwide. The church offers its members many significant benefits. It offers social security—the church always takes care of the needs of its people. The Mormon church emphasizes having strong moral standards. It strives to build the family unit and provides many programs for Mormon youth (scouting, dances, recreation). This results in a very low rate of juvenile delinquency. The church challenges its laypeople to be actively involved and provides a number of things for them to do.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Charles Taze Russell, an 18-year-old, developed his own system of biblical interpretation in 1870. He began publishing a magazine titled *Zion's Watchtower* in which he publicized his version of biblical interpretation. In 1884 the Watchtower Society was officially formed. The Watchtower Society later changed its name to Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931.

They claim that the Bible is their final authority for truth. They believe that Jesus was originally the archangel Michael, who then became Jesus and lived a sinless life on earth. They believe that Christ has already returned to earth three times: in 1874 Christ came to the "upper air" and later caught up the apostles and the dead members of the Jehovah's Witnesses; in 1914 Christ ended the times of the Gentiles and began to reign; and in 1918 He came to the spiritual temple and began the judgment of the nations.

Today, there are over 4 million members worldwide. Jehovah's Witnesses have a great sense of urgency that the Battle of Armageddon is coming soon, and therefore they are very zealous missionaries, going door-to-door to try and win people. Members are very knowledgeable about the end times. Every member knows a great deal about the Bible and can often quote large amounts of Scripture.

20 BIBLE TWISTERS

Mormon Doctrine

God has a physical body.

Jesus was born of Mary and Adam and later attained the status of a god.

The Book of Mormon is on an equal authority level with the Bible.

All people have the potential to be gods.

Christ's death and resurrection only remove guilt for past sins; therefore, all people must earn their own salvation by good works.

Scripture Evidence

John 4:24

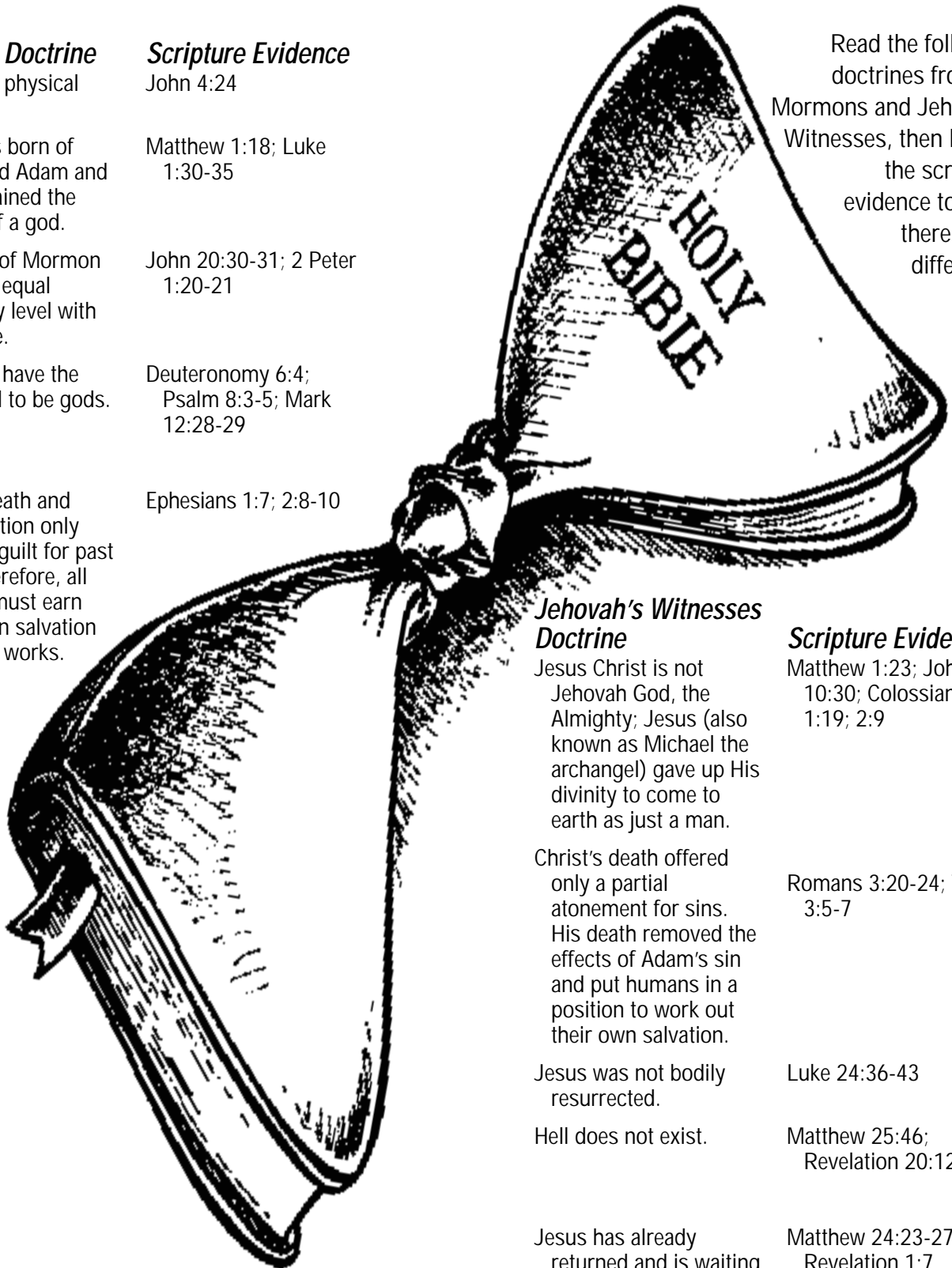
Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:30-35

John 20:30-31; 2 Peter 1:20-21

Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 8:3-5; Mark 12:28-29

Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10

Read the following doctrines from the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, then look at the scriptural evidence to see if there is any difference.



Jehovah's Witnesses Doctrine

Jesus Christ is not Jehovah God, the Almighty; Jesus (also known as Michael the archangel) gave up His divinity to come to earth as just a man.

Christ's death offered only a partial atonement for sins. His death removed the effects of Adam's sin and put humans in a position to work out their own salvation.

Jesus was not bodily resurrected.

Hell does not exist.

Jesus has already returned and is waiting only for the Battle of Armageddon to reveal himself.

Scripture Evidence

Matthew 1:23; John 10:30; Colossians 1:19; 2:9

Romans 3:20-24; Titus 3:5-7

Luke 24:36-43

Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:12-15

Matthew 24:23-27; Revelation 1:7