

Essential vs Non Essential vs Heresy doctrines

Acts 17:11 - Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Matt 7:15 - "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

1 Tim 4:16 - Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Rom 16:17 - I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

Heb 6 - Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,^[a] and of faith in God, ²instruction about cleansing rites,^[b] the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And God permitting, we will do so.

"So whatever you believe about these things, keep it between yourself and God." (Romans 14:22

Reformation "5 sola" in 1517

2 most important --Sola fide, sola scriptura, (faith in Christ alone, scripture has authority alone)

The Apostles' Creed from 390 ad establishes the nature of the trinity and the church

Christianity's essentials are core doctrines like Jesus' deity, atonement, resurrection, and salvation by grace through faith, while non-essentials are secondary issues (like baptism style, end-times views, or church governance) where Christians can respectfully disagree, guided by the principle, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity

(love)". Essentials define genuine faith, whereas non-essentials allow for denominational diversity and personal conscience, fostering unity through love.

Essentials (Core Doctrines)

These are non-negotiable beliefs fundamental to being a Christian.

- **One God:** The Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- **Jesus Christ:** Fully God and fully human, sinless.
- **Incarnation:** Jesus' virgin birth.
- **Atonement:** Jesus' death on the cross for humanity's sins.
- **Resurrection:** Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead.
- **Salvation:** By grace through faith in Christ alone, not by works.
- **Second Coming:** Jesus' bodily return.
- **Scripture:** The Bible as God's revelation.
- **Eternity** – heaven and Hell

Non-Essentials (Secondary Issues)

Mainline vs evangelicals -

These are areas where Christians hold different views but remain unified in Christ, requiring liberty and love.

- **Baptism:** Mode (infant/believer, sprinkling/immersion).
- **Lord's Supper (Eucharist):** Views on presence, frequency.
- **Church Governance:** Structure (episcopal, congregational, etc.).
- **Spiritual Gifts:** Cessationism vs. continuationism (e.g., speaking in tongues).
- **End-Times Prophecy:** pre trib, post trib, Preterism Specific interpretations of Revelation.

- **Worship Styles:** Modern, Contemporary vs. traditional hymns choirs
- **Calvinism vs Arminianism (predestined or free will)**

The Guiding Principle

- **In Essentials, Unity:** Agree on the core truths.
- **In Non-Essentials, Liberty:** Allow freedom for differing views.
- **In All Things, Charity (Love):** Always act with love and grace toward others.

Heresy –

An essential doctrine that is perverted, a non negotiable that opposes a certain belief.

During the reformation, “reformers” were tortured and killed for going against the Established catholic church.

Including:

Biblical authority over the pope and tradition, inerrancy

Priesthood of the believer

Faith without works

Footnote – Luther believed in infant baptism, eucharist, liturgical high church sacramental church order, which evangelical fundamentalists do not.

In 2026, the discussion of heresy in **Mormonism** continues to be a central point of debate between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and mainstream Christian denominations. While the LDS Church considers itself the restored original Church of Jesus Christ, many Catholic, Orthodox,

and Protestant groups classify its core doctrines as heretical due to significant departures from historic creeds.

Jesus and Lucifer were brothers

Elohim Father God is married with multiple wives

We can become a god on our own planet

1. Major Doctrines Labeled as Heresy

Traditional Christianity often categorizes Mormon beliefs under specific historic heresies or unique departures from orthodoxy:

- **The Nature of God (Audianism/Polytheism):** Unlike the Trinitarian view of one God in three persons, Mormons believe the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct beings. They also teach that God has a perfected physical body and was once a mortal man who attained godhood—a concept criticized as polytheism.
- **The Nature of Jesus (Arianism/Subordinationism):** Some critics link Mormonism to Arianism because it teaches that Jesus is a separate being from the Father. However, others argue it differs from Arianism because it teaches that humans can also eventually become like God through "eternal progression".
- **Original Sin (Pelagianism):** Mormonism rejects the doctrine of original sin, believing that humans are punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression. This aligns with Pelagianism, which historic Christianity condemned.
- **Ongoing Revelation (Montanism):** The belief in modern prophets and additional scriptures like the **Book of Mormon** is viewed by many as a modern form of Montanism, which claimed that new revelations could supplement or override established scripture.

2. "The Seven Deadly Heresies" Within Mormonism

Internally, the term "heresy" has been used by LDS leaders to define false teachings that contradict Church doctrine. A famous 1980 address by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, still studied today, identified several "deadly heresies" for Church members, including:

- Believing that God is progressing in knowledge.
 - Denying that the Father and Son were involved in the creation.
 - Claiming that organic evolution is consistent with the Fall of Adam.
 - Believing that there is progression between the "degrees of glory" (levels of heaven) after the final judgment.
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From the perspective of mainstream Christianity, the primary "heresy" of the **Jehovah's Witnesses** (JWs) is their rejection of core doctrines such as the **Trinity** and the **full divinity of Jesus Christ**. Their theology is often associated with a modern form of the ancient heresy called Arianism.

Core Doctrinal Differences

Mainstream Christian denominations consider the following Jehovah's Witness beliefs to be heretical:

- **Nature of Jesus Christ:** JWs teach that Jesus is not the Almighty God, but rather a created being—specifically, God's first creation and identifiable as the Archangel Michael. This directly contradicts the Nicene Creed and the widely held Christian belief in Jesus' co-eternal divinity with God the Father.
- **The Trinity:**

They reject the doctrine of the Trinity, teaching instead that Jehovah (God the Father) is the one true God, and that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal "active force" or "power," not a distinct person of the Godhead

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- **The Soul and Afterlife:** JWs do not believe in the immortality of the soul, teaching instead that the soul dies with the body (soul sleep/annihilationism). They believe the wicked are annihilated, not eternally punished in hell. Their doctrine promises an eternal earthly paradise for most righteous believers, with only 144,000 "anointed" individuals going to heaven to rule with Christ.
- **The Bible and Translation:** JWs use their own translation of the Bible, the *New World Translation*, which critics contend was specifically altered to support their unique doctrines, such as rendering John 1:1 as "the Word was a god".

Other Controversial Practices

Beyond theological doctrines, certain practices have also led to controversy and conflict with other groups and governments:

- **Blood Transfusions:** JWs refuse whole blood transfusions, even life-saving ones, based on their interpretation of biblical passages that mention abstaining from blood.
- **Political Neutrality:** They maintain strict political neutrality, refusing to salute flags, sing national anthems, vote, or serve in the military, which has led to persecution in various countries throughout their history.
- **Shunning Former Members:** The organization practices strict social shunning of former members (apostates), meaning current JWs are generally not permitted to speak to them, even close family members.

The Spanish inquisition was held between 1478-1834

Where 150,000 were prosecuted and 5,000 executed for Heresy according to the Catholic church.

the **Catholic Church** generally distinguishes between "material" heresy (holding false beliefs) and "formal" heresy (willful, conscious denial), often

recognizing baptized Protestants as "separated brethren" rather than formal heretics.

Key Areas of Heretical Definition

- **Authority:** Catholicism claims that denying the authority of the Pope and the necessity of Tradition constitutes heresy. Protestants argue that elevating Church tradition to the same level as Scripture is the core error.
- **Salvation:** The Protestant doctrine of *sola fide* (justification by faith alone) contradicts the Catholic teaching that salvation is achieved through grace, faith, and works (sacraments).
- **Marian Dogmas:** Protestantism is considered heretical by Rome for rejecting dogmas such as the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary.
- **The Eucharist:** The Protestant denial of transubstantiation (the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine) is viewed as a significant heresy by Catholics.

Differences in Perception

- **Catholic View:** The Council of Trent anathematized major Protestant tenets, explicitly condemning them. However, modern Catholic theology acknowledges "invincible ignorance," meaning those raised in Protestant communities are not formally guilty of heresy.
- **Protestant View:** Protestants generally view Catholic doctrines not as "heresy" (which implies turning away from a previously held true faith) but as "apostasy" or deep corruption of the gospel.

Distinction Between Material and Formal Heresy

- **Material Heresy:** The belief itself is contrary to the Catholic faith, which applies to many Protestant doctrines. **Formal Heresy:** The willful and knowing rejection of Church dogma, which Catholics often do not attribute to Protestants due to their upbringing.