What Mormons Believe About Humanity

What kind of beings are we, and how do we relate to God and everything God made? Let’s take a look at how Mormonism answers those questions.

[01] Human beings existed before this mortal life.

- Latter-day Saints believe that all human beings are eternal spirits. We existed before this earthly life as God’s spirit children.
  - In some sense, they believe humans are uncreated and co-eternal with God. As the LDS scripture Doctrine and Covenants says:
  - [02] D&C 93:29: “Man was also in the beginning with God.”
  - In another sense, as spirits we are seen as the literal sons and daughters of heavenly parents.
  - [03] Abraham 3:22: “Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones.”
  - In one LDS instructional manual tells us that “intelligences” here are personal spirits created by God in the premortal life.
- The Bible teaches that human life and existence begins in this world.
  - [04] Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.
  - When God made Adam, he did not place an existing personal spirit into a physical body, but animated that body with the breath of life.

[05] Human beings are the literal offspring of God.

- When Mormons say that human spirits were created by God, they mean that God is our Father, not just metaphorically, but literally. Gospel Principles:
  - [06] “All men and women are literally the sons and daughters of God. ‘Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth…’"
- But the Bible teaches that people become children of God by faith.
  - [07] John 1:12-13 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.
  - No one is a child of God by nature. Only those who believe in Jesus and accept him as Savior can become children of God
  - [08/08a] Romans 8:14-16 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. // Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children.
  - Anyone can become a child of God by adoption, when we receive His Spirit at the point of spiritual conversion.
    - That happens in this life, not in some pre-mortal world.

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1 Gospel Principles, 9.10
Human beings are the same kind of being as God.  
- If people are literal children of God, it follows that God is the same kind of being that we are, and that we are of the same species as God.
  - [10] "Latter-day Saints see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential. Each has an eternal core and is 'a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.'"  
  - [11] "Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny."
- The Bible teaches that humans are finite creatures, not potential deities.
  - [12] Psalm 8:4-5 What are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.
  - It’s true that human beings are amazing creatures. But we are "mere mortals" AND we are lower than God.
  - Genesis 2 shows that God has the power of life and death, and we are completely dependent on him.
- God is not an exalted man. We are two completely different kinds of beings.
  - God is infinite & self-existent.
  - We are finite & dependent on God for our existence.

Mormons believe: we can become powerful beings that create & rule worlds populated by our spirit offspring - just as God did. This is called "exaltation."
- [14 / 14a] "To live in the highest part of the celestial kingdom is called exaltation or eternal life. To be able to live in this part of the celestial kingdom, people must have been married in the temple and must have kept the sacred promises they made in the temple. // They will receive everything our Father in Heaven has and will become like Him. They will even be able to have spirit children and make new worlds for them to live on, and do all the things our Father in Heaven has done."
- [15] "You have got to learn how to be a god yourself."

But the Bible portrays human beings as fallen and spiritually lost. Far from god-like, we are in desperate need of God’s mercy to save us from our sins.
- [16] Romans 3:10-11 As the Scriptures say, ‘No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.
- [17] Romans 3:23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.
- This view is very hard to reconcile with the idea of divine potential.

While Latter-day Saints use many words and phrases familiar to traditional Christianity, the underlying world view of Mormonism is very different from historic, biblical Christian faith. This is seen most dramatically when comparing what the two groups believe about the nature of God and the nature of human beings.

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2 "Becoming Like God" at lds.org
3 The Family: A Proclamation to the World
4 Gospel Fundamentals (2002) - (a manual for LDS high school students)
5 King Follett discourse