



# The Mormon Jesus: A Biography

*John G. Turner*

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The nineteenth-century Mormon prophet Joseph Smith published a new scripture dominated by the figure of Jesus Christ, dictated revelations presented as the words of the Christian savior, spoke of encountering Jesus in visions, and told his followers that their messiah and king would soon return to the earth. From the author of the definitive life of Brigham Young comes a biography of the Mormon Jesus that revises and enriches our understanding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Over the past two hundred years, Jesus has connected the Latter-day Saints to broader currents of Christianity, even while particular Mormon beliefs and practices have been points of differentiation and conflict. The Latter-day Saints came to understand Jesus Christ as the literal son of his father, the exalted brother of God's other spirit children, who should aspire to become like him. They gave new meaning to many titles for Jesus Christ: Father, Son of God, Lord, Savior, Firstborn, Elder Brother, Bridegroom, and Jehovah.

While some early beliefs became canonized and others were discarded, Jesus Christ remains central to Latter-day Saint scripture, doctrine, and religious experience. Contemporary Mormon leaders miss no opportunity to proclaim their church's devotion to the Christian savior, in part because evangelical Protestants denounce Mormonism as a non-Christian cult. This tension between Mormonism's distinctive claims and the church's desire to be accepted as Christian, John G. Turner argues, continues to shape Mormon identity and attract new members to the church.

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