

- ****I. Introduction to Mormonism****
 - Founded April 6, 1830 by Joseph Smith
 - Smith claimed a personal visit from God the Father and Jesus Christ
 - All churches and creeds declared an abomination
 - Now known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)
 - Largest faction of the original Church of Christ established by Smith
- ****II. Joseph Smith's Claims and Foundational Texts****
 - God revealed no Christian denomination was correct
 - Smith claimed to restore the true faith
 - Divine messengers appeared to Smith, most frequently Moroni
 - Moroni described as a glorified being, son of the prophet Mormon
 - Moroni revealed metal plates buried in the woods
 - Smith translated the plates into the Book of Mormon (published 1830)
 - Smith claimed his church to be the only true church on earth
- ****III. Mormon Scripture and the Problem of Adding to God's Word****
 - Four texts used by Mormons
 - The Bible
 - The Book of Mormon
 - Doctrine and Covenants
 - The Pearl of Great Price
 - Biblical warnings against adding to or removing from Scripture
 - Deuteronomy 4:2 -- God commands nothing be added or removed from His word
 - Revelation 22:19 -- warns of consequences for removing from Scripture
 - The plates written in "Reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphic
 - Moroni allegedly took the plates to heaven, making verification impossible
 - Over 5,800 Greek NT manuscripts exist as contrast to Mormon claims
 - Hundreds to thousands of changes have been made to the Book of Mormon since 1830
- ****IV. What Mormons Believe About God****
 - Polytheistic -- many gods exist
 - God the Father is god only of this world
 - Gods were once humans who achieved glorified status
 - Couplet: "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become"
 - Goal is to become a god of one's own world
 - God has not always been the supreme being -- attained status through effort
 - God the Father has a physical body of flesh and bones
 - Brigham Young taught Adam was the Father and God (1852)
 - Orson Pratt taught an infinite regression of gods -- each God begotten by a prior Father
 - Brigham Young: "The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself"

- **V. Biblical Contrast on the Nature of God**

- God has always existed and always will -- He was not created
- Isaiah 46:9 -- God declares there is no other God and none like Him
- God is Spirit, not flesh and bones
- John 4:24 -- God is Spirit; true worship is in spirit and truth
- Biblical passages affirming God's eternal and unique nature
 - Psalm 90:2 -- God is from everlasting to everlasting
 - Isaiah 43:10 -- No God formed before or after Him
 - Isaiah 44:6 -- He is the First and the Last; no God beside Him
 - Isaiah 45:5 -- He is the LORD; there is no God beside Him
 - Malachi 3:6 -- God does not change
 - John 1:1 -- Christ already exists at creation
 - John 8:58 -- Jesus declares "Before Abraham was, I am"

- **VI. Biblical Worship**

- True worship involves genuine love for God and a surrendered heart
- Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life" points to worshiping God as He has revealed Himself

- Worship encompasses the entire life
- Components of biblical worship
 - Singing -- Psalm 95:1
 - Prayer -- Psalm 141:2
 - Giving -- Philippians 4:18
 - Serving -- Romans 12:1
 - Obedience -- 1 Samuel 15:22
 - Thanksgiving -- Psalm 100:4
 - Loving others -- Hebrews 13:1
 - Doing good and sharing -- Hebrews 13:16
- Hebrews 13:15-16 connects verbal praise to a life of good works

- **VII. What Mormons Believe About Jesus**

- Jesus was the first of God the Father's spiritual children
- Jesus became human through a physical relationship between God the Father and Mary

- Jesus is considered a god, and any human can also become a god
- The death of Christ purchased resurrection for all people
- Jesus and Satan are both taught to be spiritual offspring of Elohim and a Heavenly Mother

- Jesus was conceived through a physical relationship between Elohim and Mary
 - Mormonism's own account implies Elohim fathered a child with His own spirit daughter

- **VIII. The Four Eternal Destinations in Mormon Teaching**

- Celestial Kingdom
 - Highest degree of glory
 - Presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ

- For those who accepted the fullness of the gospel and participated in LDS ordinances
 - Terrestrial Kingdom
 - Middle degree of glory
 - For honorable people who did not fully accept or remain faithful to the gospel
 - Presence of the Son but not the fullness of the Father
 - Telestial Kingdom
 - Lowest degree of glory
 - For those who rejected the gospel and lived in serious sin
 - Associated with the influence of the Holy Spirit, not direct presence of Father or Son
 - Outer Darkness
 - Entered after redemption from spirit prison
 - For those who received full knowledge of LDS truth and deliberately rejected God
 - No glory whatsoever

- **IX. Mormon Misuse of 1 Corinthians 15**
 - Mormons derive their kingdom structure from 1 Corinthians 15:40-42
 - Problems with their interpretation
 - "Celestial" means heavenly or in the sky
 - "Terrestrial" means on the earth or in the world
 - "Telestial" is never mentioned in the passage
 - Paul's actual context -- the difference between the present physical body and the resurrected body
 - Before resurrection: earthly state
 - After resurrection: heavenly state
 - The Bible never teaches that the wicked eventually inherit glory
 - Eternity is determined by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
 - No second chance for redemption after death

- **X. Satan's Strategy and the Cult Pattern**
 - Satan's first attack was on God's word, not God's existence
 - Satan's progression with Eve
 - Question God's word
 - Distort God's word
 - Contradict God's word -- Genesis 3:4, "You shall not surely die"
 - Disobey God's word
 - Cults follow the same pattern -- questioning and distorting Scripture out of pride
 - John 17 -- God's word is truth
 - Mormons claim Lucifer did Adam and Eve a favor
 - Isaiah 14:12-15 -- Lucifer's fall described; his desire to be like the Most High
 - Isaiah 44:6 -- God declares He is the First and the Last and there is no other God

- **XI. Mormon View of the Bible and Biblical Reliability**

- LDS 8th Article of Faith -- the Bible is the word of God only insofar as it is translated correctly
- Bruce McConkie claimed many plain and precious things were deleted from the Bible
- Wherever Mormon doctrine contradicts the Bible, they claim the Bible is wrong or mistranslated
- The Book of Mormon presented as the divinely provided corrective
- Joseph Smith Translation (JST)
 - Smith had no knowledge of biblical or historical languages
 - A revision of the KJV altering text to align with Mormon doctrine
 - Added a prophecy of Joseph Smith himself at the end of Genesis
- 1st Nephi 13 teaches the Bible is corrupted and missing plain and precious parts
- Mormons teach a great apostasy occurred requiring restoration

- **XII. The King Follett Discourse**

- Joseph Smith's last major recorded message
- A funeral discourse given for Elder King Follett
- Smith claims to use the Bible to prove his teaching about God
- Presents himself as speaking with divine authority as a prophet
- Key teaching: "God himself was once as we are now"
 - God the Father was once a mortal man
 - God progressed to become an exalted being
 - God now has a physical body of flesh and bones
- Smith interprets Genesis 1:26-27 as proof that God has a literal human physical form
- Adam is said to have walked and talked with God as one man with another
- Smith's conclusion: if God could be seen today, He would look like a human being

- **XIII. Comparison: LDS Teaching vs. Historic Biblical Christianity**

Topic	Historic Biblical Christianity	Joseph Smith's Teaching
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God's nature	Eternally God	Was once as we are now
God's origin	Did not become God	Became exalted
God's form	Not a mortal man	An exalted Man
God's body	Not limited to physical form	Has a physical form
Number of Gods	One eternal God	Plurality of gods and exalted beings

- **XIV. Biblical Response and Our Goal**

- Our goal is never to argue but to share truth in love
- The desire is to reveal truth when the Lord opens doors
- Acts 4:12 -- salvation is found in no other name than Jesus Christ
- No one can achieve the status of God -- only He is holy
- We are made holy only through faith in Jesus
- Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, the only sinless man
- Jesus and God are one in essence

- Jesus existed before His physical birth
- It is impossible to reach heaven by our own works -- only faith in Christ makes it possible