

Mormonism

Same vocabulary but different definitions.
A different Gospel and a different God.

Version E

This PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV. jtaylor@southreno.com • Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

Very Important statement from Pastor Joe

This material is not meant to be personalized or insulting. Also, in no way is it meant to be demeaning of Mormons, in general. Mormons are wonderful people who believe they are doing the right thing by their god and beliefs. They are sincere, family-oriented, talented, educated, pro-life and stand where most Christians do on the moral issues that face our nation. There is some common ground morally—for sure! Mormons, like all people, are also “fallen.” There are also some grave differences in the understanding and treatment of scriptures between biblical Christianity and Mormonism. **The purpose of this PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET is to bring a clear theological and historical understanding as to the differences between Traditional Christianity and Mormonism.** Also, this material is not meant to be political in any way. It is meant to be helpful. May the God of Scripture bless all who read this material. *This discussion is not meant to be personal—just theological.*

NOTE: Though many resources were used to create a work of even this size, the following is a list of primary sources—utilized heavily—to develop this Pastor's Guide Sheet: www.watchman.org, “How to Answer a Mormon” by Robert A Morey; “The Facts on the Mormon Church” by John Ankerberg and John Weldon; Counseling Keys – Mormonism”, by June Hunt; The Book of Mormon; “Reasoning from the Scriptures with Mormons” by Ron Rhodes and Marian Bodine; “The 10 most Important things to say to a Mormon” by Ron Rhodes and a strategic video from Lifeway Christian Resources titled, “The Mormon Puzzle—Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints.” Sources and footnotes are provided as a means to verify facts. Hopefully, these facts will be systematically presented as to provide a clear rationale as to the conclusions made.



Some Beginning Q and A

Where Did the Name Mormon Come From? The name *Mormon* is now commonly used in reference to those who believe in the Book of Mormon. According to the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, Mormon is the name of a man who allegedly lived as a prophet in America during the early fifth century AD. Smith stated that the prophet Mormon compiled and abridged the records of his people into what is known today as the Book of Mormon. He engraved this history on golden plates. Now, members of the LDS leadership prefer not to be called Mormons but just called “Latter-day Saints” or just “LDS”.¹

Who are the “Latter-day Saints”? Their founder, Joseph Smith taught that from shortly after the first century until 1830, there was no true church, therefore no true saints, with authority from God on the earth. In 1830, Joseph Smith “restored” the only “true Church.”² Though there are several different types of Mormons, the three largest groups that believe in the Book of Mormon are:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) - Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, this branch is the largest of three groups, with over 14.8 million members worldwide but only 30% (4.5 million regularly attend weekly services.)

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) - Headquartered in Independence, Missouri, the members neither call themselves Mormons nor believe in many of the LDS practices, such as baptism for the dead and polygamy. The RLDS have shunned the use



The Mormon Temple – Salt Lake City, Utah

¹ See Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of Restoration*, 2nd ed. (Bountiful, UT: Restoration Research, 1982).

² Documentation for the “total apostasy” can be found in Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1978), 1:5–20; Joseph Smith, Jr., *Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.).

of the word Mormon in reference to themselves or their church. In 2001, the RLDS church officially changed its name to The Community of Christ.³

The Fundamental Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS) - With no official headquarters, most FLDS live in and around Utah. They do believe in all the tenants of LDS churches but also believe in polygamy. They also tend to be a little more cultic in their living style (communes) and have less contact with the outside world.

What are the Authorized Mormon Scriptures? Four books called The Standard Works make up the canon of authorized scripture for the Mormons: the Bible (7th Ed KJV, NKJV or JST), the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.

About the Bible

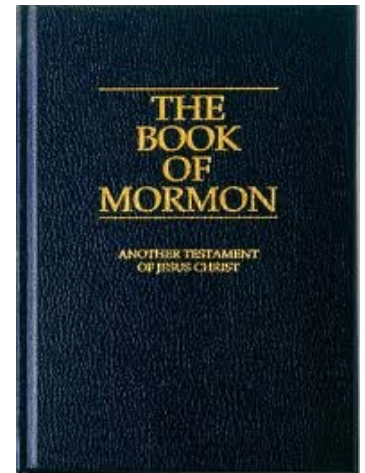
“Do Mormons believe in the Bible?” - Yes, but conditionally. Their Eighth Article of Faith says, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”

“Did Joseph Smith attempt to make changes in the Holy Bible?” - Yes. In Smith’s “Inspired Version,” now usually referred to as the Joseph Smith Translation by the Utah-based Church, Smith made wholesale changes to major blocks of text as well as smaller changes throughout most of the Bible; included are significant changes to the Book of Revelation, whose author, the apostle John, cautioned:

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” - Revelation 22:18-19

About The Book of Mormon

“Who wrote the Book of Mormon?” – Technically, Joseph Smith did. The book itself, however, claims to be an abridged record of people living in the Americas, compiled mostly by Mr. Mormon (The person/prophet), the next-to-last man in a long line of prophets/leaders. His son, Moroni, made a few additions after Mormon’s death, then sealed and hid the record in the hill Cumorah in what is now upstate New York. Smith alleged that Moroni, now resurrected, visited him and told him where to find the gold plates on which the record was written. Smith claimed that he later translated the Book of Mormon “by the gift and power of God” from the “Reformed Egyptian” hieroglyphics in which it was originally written. (No other examples of this language have ever been found in the Americas or anywhere in the world.) Of his book, Smith declared, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”⁴ Interestingly, almost 4,000 corrections have been made to date since the 1830 version in “the most correct of any book.”⁵ Yet the Bible says,



“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.” - Isaiah 40:8

“What does the Book of Mormon contain?” The Book of Mormon, with the subtitle ‘Another Testament of Jesus Christ,’ is said to contain an abridged history spanning more than a thousand years, from 600 BC to AD 421. It supposedly chronicles the migration of the prophet Lehi, his family and others from Jerusalem to the Americas and the subsequent history of Lehi’s descendants. They were divided into two nations, taking their names from two of Lehi’s sons, Nephi and Laman. The Nephites originally were the more righteous of the two groups. The Lamanites were cursed by God for their wickedness by being given dark skin. Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, supposedly visited and taught these people, resulting in a 200 year reign of unity and peace. Eventually, however, the

³ CF., www.cofchrist.org/seek/history.asp.

⁴ Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4:461.

⁵ For documentation of all the textual changes made before 1981, see Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, n.d.). In the current 1981 edition of the *Book of Mormon* several hundred additional changes were made—most notably 2 Nephi 30:6.

Nephites became so wicked that, rather than cursing them with dark skin⁶, God used the dark skinned Lamanites to utterly destroy them. The Book of Mormon also is said to contain the doctrinal teaching of the prophet leaders of the Nephites and of Jesus Christ during his visit to the Americas.

“Why are charges of plagiarism brought against the Book of Mormon?” Charges of plagiarism continue to plague Joseph Smith because of the lengthy portions of Scripture lifted from Isaiah and Matthew, yet not credited to the KJV Bible. Shorter quotations from, or obvious allusions to, both Old and New Testament passages are also scattered throughout the Book of Mormon without proper credit. Although the Book of Mormon was supposedly written in Reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics etched on golden plates before AD 400 (then allegedly found, translated by Joseph Smith and published in 1830), it contains much verbatim text from the King James Bible. When paralleling the Bible, the Book of Mormon even contains the italicized words added in 1611 by the King James translators and not found in the underlying Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Approximately 27,000 words from the KJV are found in the Book of Mormon—400 verses and portions of verses. Also, many concepts appear to be borrowed from an 1823 publication by Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews*.⁷

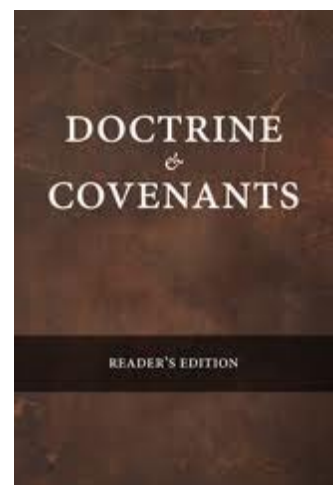
“Have archaeologists discovered any findings of the early Mormons’ history?” No, archaeologists cannot substantiate their reported existence. The Book of Mormon describes wheeled vehicles, steel, glass, elephants, horses and coins (cf., 1 Nephi 18:25 and Ether 9:18-19). that didn’t exist in the Americas during Book of Mormon times. LDS critics maintain that the book of Mormon is a work of fiction created in the 19th century. Critics do not accept that the book of Mormon relates to the actual history of real people who came to the Americas and were steel-smelting, chariot-driving, Christ-worshiping, Temple-building, city-building people, multiplying into millions, yet left absolutely no trace, archaeologically of their existence. No archaeological, linguistic, genetic or any other measurable, academic evidence of a Hebrew culture in the Americas has ever been found to support the existence of such a people portrayed in the book of Mormon.⁸ According to archaeologists, none of these existed in the Americas during the Book of Mormon time period (about 600 BC to AD 421). The Smithsonian Institute Department of Anthropology issued this statement:

“Smithsonian archaeologists see no connection between the archaeology of the New World (America) and the subject matter of the book [Book of Mormon].”⁹

Resource Recommendation: www.mormontalk.com contains a lot of documentation on this topic. You can click on an address in the Book of Mormon and also click on comparative documentation critical to LDS positions, as well.

About the Doctrine and Covenants

“Does all Mormon doctrine come from the Bible?” No. The main source of doctrine is the Doctrine and Covenants, first published in 1835 as a major revision of the 1833 Book of Commandments. The Doctrine and Covenants contains a collection of Joseph Smith’s “revelations,” a few other significant items and most of the doctrines distinctive to the Mormon Church. Included would be the organization of the Church, baptism for the dead, plural celestial marriage, the three degrees of glory, the plurality of gods, and the potential of human beings becoming gods. The Mormon doctrine that God the Father was once a mortal man living on another planet is not taught explicitly in the Mormon Standard Works. It is upheld, however, by hundreds of statements by Joseph Smith and subsequent Mormon prophets and apostles, books they have authored and lesson manuals and other publications produced by the Mormon Church. Occasional contradictions are difficult to explain, such as the commandment from God to Joseph Smith’s wife Emma to accept his other wives (Section 132). However, the Book of Mormon teaches: “Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord” (Jacob 2:24). Since its initial publication, there have been over 65,000 changes.



⁶ Cf., *Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 5.

⁷ Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 126–28.

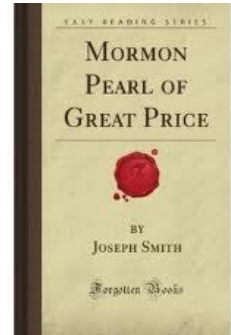
⁸ A Mormon History of the Americas: *Can the History of the American continent as presented in the Book of Mormon be true?*, Harvest House Publishers (2) 2002; cf., www.MormonThink.com/book-of-mormon-problems.html.

⁹ Tanner and Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, 133–41.

About *The Pearl of Great Price*

“Are there literary problems within Pearl of Great Price?” - Yes. The Pearl of Great Price, the shortest of the four standard works contains:

- The Book of Moses: a revision of the first six chapters of Genesis.
- The Book of Abraham: alleged by Smith to be a translation of material written by Abraham on papyri. The papyri from which Smith worked have been rediscovered and shown to contain nothing but very common, very pagan, Egyptian funeral documents.
- Other writings of Joseph Smith: his revision of Matthew 23:39–24:51, autobiographical material, the thirteen Articles of Faith.



What Are the Mormon Buildings?

Most people assume that Mormon buildings have open access policies similar to those of Christian churches. However, this is untrue. Understanding the differences is important.

Temples

The Mormon temple is not a public place of worship but a place where ordinances and ceremonies are administered for both the living and the dead.

- Temple ceremonies are off-limits to nonmembers and even to Mormons who have never reached the high level of commitment and works required for entrance. Only those who have paid their tithes and have a “recommend” from their bishop and stake president can enter the temple.
- It is in the temple that Mormons gain secret knowledge and perform the occult rituals intended to bridge the chasm from human finiteness to eventual godhood. Ezra Taft Benson, a Mormon seer and prophet said, “Temples are the gateway to heaven ... a bridge to the eternities.” [Ironically, Jesus said in Acts 17:24, NIV84 - “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.”]

Temple Ceremonies

Washing and Anointing

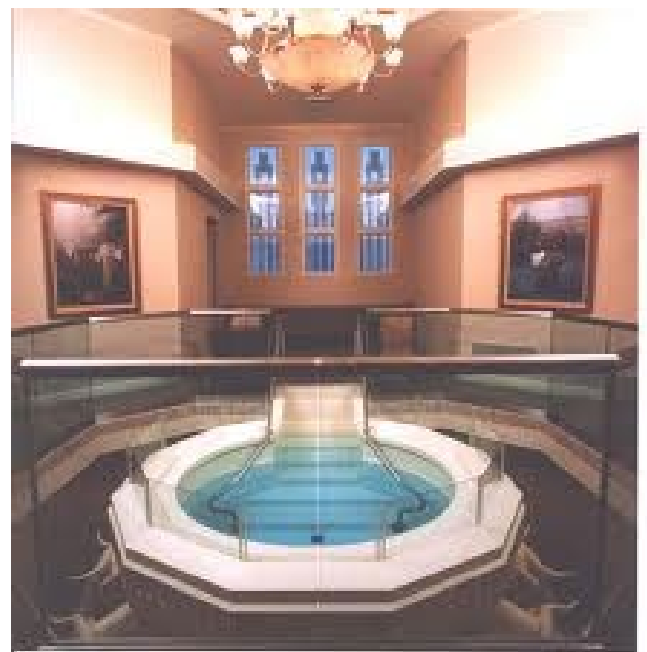
Parts of the body are ceremonially cleansed with water and anointed with oil by a temple worker so that the body can function as God intended. For example, legs are “washed” and “anointed” so they can “run and not be weary, walk and not faint.”

Endowment

In this special session Mormons receive instruction about their origin, purpose and eternal destiny. Temple workers give the new “patrons” secret signs and tokens that must be presented to gain entrance into the presence of God in the Celestial Kingdom. Patrons receive special undergarments to wear for the rest of their lives as a safeguard against “the power of the Destroyer” to ward off disease and bodily harm. Each patron is also assigned a new name to be used at the resurrection and in heaven.

Baptism for the Dead

Worthy Mormons are allowed to repeat the baptism ceremony (see picture right) to help obtain salvation for non-Mormons who have died. In pursuit of this practice the Mormon Church has compiled the most extensive genealogical records in the world.



Sealing

An ordinance performed in the authority of the Mormon priesthood by which family relationships or other blessings are promised to endure throughout eternity and not for earthly time only. This sealing power is exercised primarily for marriage covenants and sealing children to parents, ordinances being performed for both the living and the dead. Ultimate salvation, or exaltation, is contingent upon the family unit being sealed for “time and eternity.”

Tabernacles

Very few tabernacles exist. The most famous is on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in which the famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir performs regularly. A tabernacle is like a public meetinghouse and is open to the general public.

Ward Chapels

The equivalent of a church, a ward chapel is a meeting place. Serving geographical territories called “wards,” each building is usually equipped with a chapel, a social hall used for dances and other functions and offices for the local leader called a Bishop. Many ward chapels are now called “churches” and serve multiple congregations.



The Mormon Temple – Reno, Nevada

What Is the Mormon Eschatology?

Mormon doctrine differs greatly from biblical doctrine. Mormon theology has a man-centered doctrine that includes a premortal existence in a spirit world and culminates in a heaven composed of three kingdoms.¹⁰ They believe in a type of “universal salvation” in which virtually all humanity will be saved, but in varying degrees of glory in the three different kingdoms. However, the Bible teaches that not all people will be saved, but that some will enter into everlasting life in heaven and others will enter into everlasting punishment in hell.

“They [the unrighteous] will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” - Matthew 25:46

- **Telestial Kingdom**

The lowest heaven is reserved for the heathen and the wicked who reject the gospel.

- **Terrestrial Kingdom**

The second heaven will be reserved for Christians who do not accept the Mormon message, Mormons who do not live up to their church requirements, and any other men of “good will” in other religions who live honorable lives.

- **Celestial Kingdom**

This final heaven is also divided into three parts in which only persons who have been sealed by celestial marriage in a Mormon temple (in person while living on earth, or later by proxy) will slowly progress toward becoming a god. At the highest level, EXALTATION, a man becomes a god, and he will rule with his family and populate, through procreation, a separate planet of his own.^{Cf., 11 & 12}

“Mormons believe that when the good Mormon male dies, he gets to be a god of his own planet.”

“What does the Bible teach about men in their exalted state becoming gods?” - The Bible teaches that there is only one true God.

¹⁰ See James Walker and Rick Branch, *The Law of Eternal Progression*, rev. ed. (Arlington, TX: Watchman Fellowship, 2001).

¹¹ For documentation of the three kingdoms of heaven, see the Mormon Apostle’s writing—Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1976), 116, 321–22, 347–48, 401–4, 784, 778.

¹² For documentation of Mormons marriages, cf., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, 132.

"This is what the Lord says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." - Isaiah 44:6

Characteristics

In most communities, Mormon families are highly respected and very involved in community projects. Their excellent advertising campaigns, at a yearly cost of millions of dollars, project warmth and family values. For this reason it is hard for many people to realize that the Mormon Church is not a "Christian church." Yet the apostle Paul cautioned all true Christians to be discerning:

"I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough." - 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

Outer Characteristics

Mormons often look like Christians in that many have:

- Family-oriented lifestyles
- Dedication to spiritual growth
- Discipline with the prohibition of tobacco, alcohol and drugs
- Commitment to abstinence from premarital sex
- Commitment to tithing
- Emphasis on evangelism
- Appearance of being morally "perfect"

Inner Symptoms

The zeal for "good works" that characterizes the Mormon's behavior is rooted in a belief system that says performance as well as grace is prerequisite for salvation in the presence of God. They do not know that in Jesus Christ they have been set free from the law.

"Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith.' ... Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" - Galatians 3:11, 13

With a continual emphasis on personal achievement, many Mormons struggle with:

- Anger over internal discrimination
Example: Temple admittance requirements are too high for most Mormons.
- Anxiety over life's unexpected circumstances
Example: Infertile couples who are unable to provide physical bodies for spirit babies cannot meet the requirements for advancing to a higher level in heaven.
- Compulsiveness with rules and regulations
Example: Compelled to do more and more in order to be "worthy."
- Depression when failure occurs
Example: Not advancing in the "eternal progression."
- Fear of not measuring up
Example: One must be obedient to "the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."¹³ The Book of Mormon teaches "that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."¹⁴
- Guilt from inevitable failure
Example: Unable to overcome habitual "besetting sins" or otherwise meet Church standards.
- Low Self-Worth when comparing self to others
Example: Not keeping up with all the "callings" given by the church superior.
- Pride in good works
Example: Performing multiple baptisms for the dead.

¹³ Joseph Smith, Jr., "The Articles of Faith," in *Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.).

¹⁴ Cf., *The Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 25:23

Causes of Growth

Mormonism is growing rapidly because the church is sending approximately 60,000 full-time missionaries to spread the Mormon “gospel” around the world. Clean-cut, young missionaries dedicate two years of their lives to further their religion. Their zeal is appealing to many who are looking for truth. The Bible, however, exerts this caution for those who are seeking God:

“I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.” - Romans 10:2

“Why are people, even Christians, attracted to the Mormon religion?” - People are attracted to Mormonism for the very reasons that people are attracted to any religion: They appeal to our three God-given inner needs for love, for significance and for security.

- Mormons appeal to our God-given need for security, our need to belong and to feel accepted. The door-to-door evangelism done by wholesome-looking young missionaries and the persistent follow-up by members of a local church can give a lonely person a sense of being noticed, cared for, and a feeling of being wanted.
- Mormons appeal to our God-given need for significance as they present their version of meaning and purpose in life. Their plan of salvation teaches that “You can be a god” if you learn to obey the requirements of Mormonism.
- Who doesn't want to feel connected and loved? The Mormons are effective (and sincere) in their love for people.

Root Cause of Attraction

Wrong Belief for Males:

Mormonism: “I can attain the exalted state of being a god myself if I only work hard enough” (a way to fulfill the need for significance).

Biblical Truth: The fall of man into sin occurred when Adam yielded to the temptation to try to “be like God.”

“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” - Genesis 3:5

Right Belief for Males:

“I know from the Bible that eternal life cannot be earned or deserved based on my works. It is the gift of God. Salvation comes by putting my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.”

“For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” - Ephesians 2:8–9

Wrong Belief for Females:

“My security comes through being married to and producing children for a dedicated Mormon man who will one day call me from the grave to rule alongside him in heaven. Since I cannot hold the Priesthood, my Priesthood blessings must come through my husband or male relatives.”

Biblical Truth: Spiritually, there is no distinction made between males and females. All true Christians are called “sons of God.”

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” - Galatians 3:26

Right Belief for Females:

“My security is not in my husband or in any other man but is rather in coming into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by placing my total faith in Him and letting Him be Lord of my life.”

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” - Galatians 3:28

The most important thing one must remember when talking with Mormons is that they use the same vocabulary Christians do but have different definitions and understandings of the same words. They say, “god”, we say “God” but it’s two different understandings of ‘god.’

Solutions

Two of the distinguishing doctrines of Latter-day Saints are polytheism—that there are many gods—and the teaching that worthy Mormons can become gods and goddesses. Knowing the following Bible verses is paramount.

Key Verses to Memorize

“Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.”
- Isaiah 43:10-11

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Just as the apostle Paul felt great passion that all Israel be saved, today many feel that same passion that all Mormons be saved. The tenth chapter of Romans was written about those of the Jewish faith, but could easily be applied to those of the Mormon faith.

“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. ⁵ Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.” ⁶ But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” – Romans 10:1-15

V. 2 - Mormons have a zeal for God, but it is not based on biblical knowledge. V. 2

V. 3 - Instead of adhering to and receiving the righteousness that comes from God, they have established their own system of righteousness.

V. 4 - Since Christ’s death fulfilled the law, all people (including Mormons) have the opportunity to become righteous by entrusting their lives to Him.

V. 5 - Moses describes “righteousness by the law” this way: The man (Mormon) who does righteous acts is living by his own righteousness.

VV. 6-7 - “Righteousness by faith” says that no amount of human effort could have brought Jesus down from heaven to earth or could have raised Him from the dead.

V. 8 - So what does this faith say to the Mormons? Faith says righteousness is found in a person’s heart and in the verbal expression of that faith.

V. 9 - Mormons will be saved if they confess Christ alone as their Savior and believe in their hearts that His resurrection alone has the power to save them.

V. 10 - With their hearts, rather than through works or obedience to laws, Mormons can believe and be justified, and with their mouths, they can confess and be saved.

V. 11 - Mormons who put their trust in Jesus will never be put to shame.

V. 12 - There is no difference between any group of people—the same Lord is Lord of all, and He will richly bless all who call on Him.

V. 13 - Mormons who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

V. 14 - How can Mormons call on the biblical Jesus in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in this Jesus of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone presenting the Jesus of the Bible to them?

V. 15 - How can these presenters share the truth unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news”—especially to the Mormons!

Discussion about “Cult” describing Mormonism:

Pastor Joe’s Definition of a cult:

A cult is any group and/or teaching that deviates from the biblical understanding of the historic person and work of the Jesus Christ as understood by orthodox, biblical Christianity. A cult typically deviates, augments, adds or subtracts from biblical theology and understandings usually because one individual, not Christ, dictates a “new” belief because of a claimed “new revelation.”

Predictably, a cult adds to the word of God, subtracts from the person of Christ, multiplies the salvation requirements, and/or divides the follower’s loyalty.

Pastor Joe’s Statement about the word, “cult:”

I don’t feel it is always useful to utilize the word, “Cult” in our public discussions, or in private meetings where we are trying to reach a person with the biblical truth of Christ. (Like many other words, this word, “cult,” has a lot of baggage when used in a public environment. It’s a term better left to the classroom.

Many people will not really hear you when you use this term—especially, if it is used in a way that might be perceived as hateful or as a pejorative.

Galatians 1:6-7 (NIV) - ⁶ *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.*

The Mathematical Test for Cults ¹⁵

Is Mormonism really a cult? Many people wonder, what is a cult? A cult is a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious. Likewise, many people wonder, is Mormonism a cult? The simple answer is yes, it is a major cult today. But what kind of test could be applied to prove that it is a cult?

- + Does it add to God’s Word?

- Does it subtract from the person of Christ?

- × Does it multiply salvation requirements?

- ÷ Does it divide the follower’s loyalty?

¹⁵ “Patterns in the Cults,” *The Watchman Expositor* vol. 6, no. 10 (1989), www.watchman.org/cults/sepexpo.htm.

The Mathematical Test for Mormonism

+ Does it add to the Bible?

Mormon Claim: Apart from the Bible, there are three other revelations from God: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.

Biblical Correction: Before Christ, God's revelation of Himself through the prophets was fragmentary, in bits and pieces as it were, "precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10, KJV). In Christ, however, we have been given a full revelation of God and how to have a right relationship with Him. (See Hebrews 1:1–3; 2 Peter 1:3–4; 1 Peter 1:3–5.) There is therefore no need for, or reason to expect, any additional Scriptures.

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven." - Hebrews 1:1–3

- Does it subtract from the person of Christ?

Mormon Claim: "Jesus was not the only begotten son of God in the spirit, but along with his 'brother' Lucifer was one of innumerable spirit sons of God."¹⁶

Brigham Young, the second Mormon Prophet, even taught that Adam was the father of Jesus—a doctrine the Mormon Church later rejected. "When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family ... Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven."¹⁷

Biblical Correction: Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. Believers become sons of God by faith in Christ through adoption.¹⁸

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

X Does it multiply salvation requirements?

Mormon Claim: "For we labor diligently to unite, to persuade our own children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God, for we know that it is by grace that we are saved after all we can do" (The Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 25:23).

"There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, which will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out; your own blood must atone for it."¹⁹ Utah is the only state in the Union that allows death by firing squad, and this is so that the condemned has the right to shed his/her blood in atonement for the sin committed. (Compare with 1 John 1:7.)

Biblical Correction: We are not to work to be saved, but are saved by grace, then because of love, works follow.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8–9)

"How does a person receive full salvation in Mormonism as compared to Christianity?" - In Mormonism, three requirements are essential: obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Mormon gospel, being baptized into an LDS church, and being married in a temple. In biblical Christianity, however, salvation is gained by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, which means receiving Him as

¹⁶ Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages* (Salt Lake City: Stephen and Wallis, 1945), 15.

¹⁷ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, England: F. D. and S. W. Richards, 1854–86), 1:50–1.

¹⁸ Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages* (Salt Lake City: Stephen and Wallis, 1945), 17.

¹⁹ Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 3:247.

your only Lord and Savior, and giving Him control of your life. To believe means “to rely on, to trust in” the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation rather than in a system of works.

“He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ ” - Acts 16:30–31

✚ Does it divide the follower’s loyalty?

Mormon Claim: Because the Mormon Church is supposedly the “only true church,” you cannot be loyal to God without being loyal to Mormonism and its Priesthood, which holds the “keys to the kingdom.”²⁰ In effect this creates another mediator between God and man.

Biblical Correction: Salvation is dependent on no one but Jesus Christ Himself, who is the only mediator between God and man.

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

- 1 Timothy 2:5

Know the Doctrinal Test for Orthodox Christianity

Every cult varies from the cardinal doctrines of the faith. Learn how Mormonism varies from five of the six essential beliefs of orthodox Christianity.

Virgin Birth

Mormon Claim: Jesus was not born of a virgin. Christ was the product of a physical sexual union between the Mormon God, Elohim (a resurrected man), and Mary. “[Jesus Christ] was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.”²¹

Biblical Correction: Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit and was born to a virgin.

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.”

- Matthew 1:18

Atonement

Mormon Claim: Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane rather than His death on the cross is the focus of atonement in Mormonism. That atonement (in Gethsemane) is necessary for full salvation but not sufficient. Mormons’ own good works must be added to Christ’s atonement to obtain full salvation.²²

Biblical Correction: Salvation is dependent on no one but Christ Himself.

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

- Acts 4:12 (See cf., Ephesians 2:8–10 and John 1:12.

Resurrection

Mormon Claim: Jesus rose from the dead and has a physical body of flesh and bones (the same as Christian doctrine).

Biblical Correction: None needed.

Incarnation

Mormon Claim: Jesus was not unique in His humanity or His deity. Jesus was only one of many spirit sons of God, as was His spirit-brother Lucifer.²³

²⁰ Technically, Mormons believe in two churches, one of God and one of the devil. “... Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil ...” (*The Book of Mormon*, 1 Nephi 14:10).

²¹ Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:50.

²² See *The Book of Mormon*, Moroni 10:32–33.

²³ Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, 15.

Biblical Correction: God became man in the unique Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." - John 1:14

Eschatology

Mormon Claim: Hell is not a place of unending punishment for anyone. Virtually everyone will eventually go to one of the three heavenly levels: the Celestial kingdom, the Terrestrial kingdom or the Telestial kingdom.²⁴

Biblical Correction: An eternal hell exists for the wicked—for unbelievers whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. According to Jesus, most people will not benefit from His atoning sacrifice and will not receive eternal life. Instead, most will go the way of destruction.

"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
- Revelation 20:15; Also cf., Matthew 7:13–14 and Matthew 13:50.

Scripture

Mormon Claim: The Holy Bible is insufficient revelation from God. Three other revelations from God also exist: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. If the Bible and the Book of Mormon differ on any topic, the Book of Mormon's teaching takes precedence. "We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."²⁵

Biblical Correction: We are not to add to Scripture.

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book." - Revelation 22:18

The Bible is God-breathed and the sole authority on spiritual matters.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." - 2 Timothy 3:16

Know the Answers for Major Mormon Arguments

Argument: "Mormonism must be truthful because it was founded on direct revelations from God."

Answer: Mormonism does claim divine inspiration. God the Father and Jesus Christ allegedly appeared in a vision to Joseph Smith in 1820. They told him that all the existing Christian churches were in apostasy and that he would be given the truth for a new revelation of authentic Christianity. Then in 1823, an angel allegedly appeared to Smith and told him the location of certain gold plates. Through Smith's "divinely assisted" translation, the writings on these gold plates became the Book of Mormon. Smith also had many more alleged divine revelations in the years that followed. Though many people claim to receive revelations from God, this does not mean they are God's revelations. The apostle John warned:

"Many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.... We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood." - 1 John 4:1–3, 6

In this passage, John gives two criteria for recognizing the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Truth:

- Whoever acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh
- Whoever listens to the apostles



²⁴ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 670.

²⁵ Smith, "The Articles of Faith."

Who is Jesus Christ? (An Important Understanding for Christians)

The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last; the Beginning and the End

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

- Revelation 22:13

Mormon Missionaries going "door-to-door" (A Two Year Commitment)

Who is referred to in Isaiah 44:6? - "This is what the Lord says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." (Isaiah 44:6)

- The Lord (Jehovah)—the First and Last
- God (Elohim)—the only God

"Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other." - Deuteronomy 4:39

- The only God in heaven and on the earth

Who is the First and the Last? - Jesus Christ

Where did Jesus Christ come from? - Heaven and earth

"You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire."

- Deuteronomy 4:35–36

How long did Jesus Christ exist before coming in the flesh? - Always

"Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." (Psalm 90:2)

What does it mean to acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh? - It means to agree that Elohim—Jehovah God of the Old Testament—came to earth in human form in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega—the First and the Last—the Beginning and the End—the only God in heaven and on earth—the Everlasting One.

What did the apostles teach about Jesus? - Jesus is God and Savior.

"To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours." - 2 Peter 1:1

Jesus is also Lord.

"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ..." - James 2:1

What does Mormonism teach about Jesus?

- Jehovah is the First and the Last.
- Jesus is neither the first nor the last God, nor the one and only God for this world.
- Jesus is a separate God from the Father and the Holy Spirit and has no right to say He is Elohim.
- Jesus has not always been God but was once spirit matter incorporated into a spirit body through the procreation process engaged in by God the Father and one of His wives, to form the spirit baby that finally progressed to Godhead.

What could cause such discrepancy in the two teachings? - The apostle Paul warned about false apostles by pointing out that "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). Our world has false prophets, false apostles and an angelic realm that can and will deceive people into thinking they are God's messengers. Therefore, claims of divine revelation do not ensure divine origin. Paul stated with certainty:

"Even if ... an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" - Galatians 1:8

Argument: “Mormonism and biblical Christianity have the same Jesus.”

Answer: This is not true. For example, Mormon doctrine denies that:

- Jesus is born of a virgin. Mormons refute that Jesus was born to a virgin. Rather, they present that Christ’s physical body was the product of a physical sex act between the heavenly Father and Mary (who in the premortal existence was His own spirit daughter). Brigham Young wrote, “The birth of the Savior was as natural as the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood—was begotten of His Father, as we were of our fathers.” However, the Bible teaches that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

“What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:20)

- Christ’s deity is unique. Mormon doctrine teaches that not only are there other gods before both Jesus and His Father, but also all humanity was with God “in the beginning.” All people are spiritually begotten sons and daughters of God, as was Jesus a son, and all people are eternal beings with the potential of likewise progressing to Godhood.

Mormon leaders and church lesson manuals frequently refer to Christ as “the Only Begotten in the flesh.” However, the Bible teaches that He is the only begotten Son of God, period. There is no textual support in any ancient, biblical manuscript for adding “in the flesh.”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

- Christ’s existence with the Father was unique. Nowhere in the Bible is any other man said to have been with God in the beginning, much less that he was God in the beginning.

“In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

- Christ created everyone and everything on earth. All people and things on earth were created by Him.

“Through him [Christ] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” (John 1:3)

- Christ created everything in heaven. Nothing existed eternally, but all things came into being.

“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” (Colossians 1:16)

Argument: “Jesus had multiple wives.”²⁶

Mormon teaching: Mormon leaders have taught in General Conferences that Jesus was married at Cana of Galilee to Lazarus’ sisters, Mary and Martha, as well as to Mary Magdalene.

Answer: Nowhere does the Bible mention any marriage or any wives of Jesus. But more importantly, Jesus considered polygamy and sexual relations outside of a monogamous marriage to be sin. Jesus taught that any man who divorced his wife, for any cause other than fornication, and married another woman would be committing adultery.

“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” - Matthew 19:9

The Jesus of the Bible was sinless and therefore never entered into polygamous marriages.

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” - 2 Corinthians 5:21

²⁶ For example, see Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde’s address in Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:210.

Argument: "Jesus had children by His wives."

Mormon teaching: Mormon leaders say that Jesus had children, whose descendants are still on the earth.²⁷

Answer: This Mormon teaching runs counter to the following Messianic prophecy, which conservative theologians traditionally say refers to Christ.

"By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken." - Isaiah 53:8

This passage clearly indicates that Jesus would have no earthly children. However, when Isaiah 53:10 in the King James Version says the Messiah "shall see his seed," the context indicates, and scholars agree, that the seed spoken of here are born-again believers, adopted sons and daughters of God through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:15–16; Galatians 4:5–6; Ephesians 1:5).

Though the Mormon apostle attempted to use Isaiah 53:10 to bolster the claim that Jesus had natural children, the Book of Mormon itself contradicts that idea in Mosiah 15:10–13.

Argument: "Jesus atoned for sin when he sweated blood in the Garden of Gethsemane."

Mormon teaching: The Mormon Jesus made atonement for sin, not so much by His death on the cross as by His suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. This is supposed to have been accomplished by His suffering so deeply that he sweat blood.

"Behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people." (The Book of Mormon, Mosiah 3:7)

Answer: While Mormonism links the Atonement to the Cross in a relatively minor way, the primary emphasis is on Gethsemane as the place where the suffering of Jesus made possible the forgiveness of sins. The primary "proof-text" from the Bible used by Mormons to support the garden atonement doctrine is Luke 22:44.

However, this passage neither says that Jesus sweat great drops of blood from every pore of His body—nor indicates that He sweat blood at all. The phrase "as it were" in King James English is the equivalent of "like" in modern English. It is a form of expression that is called a simile, comparing one thing to another as being similar.

"Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." - Luke 22:44, KJV

Mormonism teaches that Jesus' redemptive work on the Cross, and thus the shedding of His blood there, His death, is not sufficient for man's complete salvation. To Christ's work must be added the works and personal righteousness of the Mormon "gods in embryo." Both Christ's work and their own works are essential prerequisites to receiving full salvation—Godhood. Quite unlike this, the Jesus of biblical Christianity saves individuals apart from their own works or law keeping. "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works." (Romans 4:4–6)



Clearly there are great differences between the Mormon Jesus and the Jesus of the Bible. Mormonism presents its unbiblical doctrines about Christ as "additional" information. Unfortunately it is not merely additional and unbiblical; it is anti-biblical, anti-Christian, contrary information that cannot be reconciled with the Bible's teaching on Christ.

Committed Mormons wear sacred undergarments to remind themselves that they are to be "separated from the world." These garments remind them of their "higher calling" as Latter-day Saints. (They are also called "Temple Garments.")

²⁷ Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:82–3, 210, 4:248, 259–60.

The Biblical Jesus:

- was uniquely born of a virgin (Matthew 1:18, 20)
- was uniquely God (John 1:18)
- was uniquely sinless (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15)

By the sacrifice of His perfect life, His death on the Cross, alone, Jesus atoned for the sins of His people, who receive Him by faith and are born of God (John 1:12–13; Romans 5:1; 1 Peter 1:3–5). These things are not true of the Mormon Jesus.

Use the Book of Mormon to Point Out Conflicts with Their Own Teachings

Mormonism's own writings are rife with contradictions. Between its scriptures and its current teachings, Mormon writings are in conflict with each other. The Mormon Church cannot be relied on to believe and obey its own scriptures.

Mormon Teaching - A Mormon can be baptized for a dead relative to make that relative's salvation possible.

"We have the privilege of being baptized for our dead, and performing other ordinances for them, and thus become saviors on Mount Zion."²⁸

Conflict with Writings:

Book of Mormon—

"For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world. For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked." (The Book of Mormon, Alma 34:32–35)

What the Bible says:

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." - Hebrews 9:27, KJV

• Mormon Teaching

God developed from being a man on another world, and human beings can become gods and goddesses.

"As man now is, God once was. As God now is, man may be ... A son of God, like God to be, would not be robbing deity."²⁹

Conflict with Writings:

Book of Mormon - "For I know that god is neither a changeable being but He is an unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity." (The Book of Mormon, Moroni 8:18)

What the Bible Says

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psalm 90:2, KJV)

²⁸ The Mormon apostle Charles C. Rich, in Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 19:255.

²⁹ Clyde J. Williams, *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984), 9.

- **Mormon Teaching**

There are many gods.³⁰

Conflict with Writings:

Book of Mormon - "And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one." (The Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 11:27)

What the Bible Says:

"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." - 1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

- **Mormon Teaching** - God changes, must always progress, or else begin regression, potentially even to the point of ceasing to be God. Contradicting Mormon apostle Orson Pratt, the President of Brigham Young University taught:

"... Brother Orson Pratt has, in theory, bounded the capacity of God. According to his theory, God can progress no further in knowledge and power; but the God that I serve is progressing eternally...."³¹

Conflict with Writings:

Book of Mormon - "For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing? And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles. But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is the same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are." (The Book of Mormon, Mormon 9:9–11)

What the Bible Says:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." - James 1:17, KJV

- **Mormon Teaching** - God the Father has a physical body as an essential part of his being.

Conflict with Writings:

Book of Mormon - "The king said: Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem? And Aaron said unto him: Yea, he is that Great Spirit, and he created all things both in heaven and in earth. Believest thou this? And he said: Yea, I believe that the Great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will believe thy words and man can become God." (The Book of Mormon, Alma 22:9–11)

What the Bible Says:

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." - John 4:24, KJV

Salvation Prayer

Anyone can be sincere and yet sincerely wrong. Do you think that some of the teachings you've been taught have been in error? Do you feel led by the Lord to line up your life with the Bible?

Are you being convicted to renounce false teaching and turn to Jesus Christ alone for your salvation? He invites you to enter into a relationship with Him that will last forever. If that's the need in your heart, pray this prayer (on the next page):

³⁰ For example, see concerning Abraham in Smith, *Pearl of Great Price*, 4:1–31. Also see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1977), 346, 370–75.

³¹ Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:286.

Heavenly Father,

I admit that I have sinned. I know I have broken Your laws and that I'm not worthy to be in Your presence. Please forgive me for all my sins. I realize that Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior. I'm no longer trusting in my good works or ordinances to save me. Neither am I relying on obeying any rules or laws to save me. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Right now, I recognize that You rose from the dead and offer me full salvation in the presence of God as a free gift. I ask You to come into my heart to be my Lord and my Savior. Make me the person You want me to be.

In Your Holy Name I pray. Amen

Know the Do's and Don'ts for Witnessing to a Mormon

Don't make assumptions about a Mormon, particularly about personal beliefs. Not all Mormons believe alike. When dealing with doctrine, avoid phrases like "You believe" or even "Mormons believe." Instead, refer to the Mormon Church itself or to Mormon scriptures or leaders, quoting what they have actually said, written, or otherwise published.

"A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction." - Proverbs 16:23

Do ... Develop a personal relationship with the Mormon.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." - Proverbs 27:17

Don't be afraid to be bold. Mormons often view boldness as evidence of commitment and authority.

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."
- 2 Timothy 1:7

Do ... Be gentle and kind when confronting. At all costs, avoid rudeness, arrogance, or doctrinal brutality that tries to correct immediately every error at every turn. Many errors that are not core to the discussion may be temporarily sidestepped.

"The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth."

- 2 Timothy 2:24-25

Don't assume that Mormons know all the teachings of their church—they don't.

"A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions."

- Proverbs 18:2

Do ... Research to become familiar with key Mormon writings, doctrines and teachings.

"It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way." - Proverbs 19:2

Don't allow yourself to be sidetracked. Obtain a clear answer to the questions above. A clear answer would be either "Yes," "No" or even "I really don't know." Don't be "conformed to this world" in thinking that exposing and refuting error is bad just because it is negative.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2)

Do ... Ask Mormons if Jesus can save people from their sins, granting complete, permanent forgiveness of all sins and eternal life in the presence of God without the mediating help of any other person or organization.

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

- Acts 4:12

Don't assume you are talking the same language—define your terms. Mormons frequently use the same terms as Christians. However, they assign different meanings to them. For example, Joseph Smith said this about God:

"I will go back to the beginning before the world was, to show what kind of a being God is.... God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man.... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see...."He was once a man like us; ... God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ did.... Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you ..."³²

God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the only God in all existence.

"Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other." - Deuteronomy 4:39

Do ... Find out what the Mormon believes. Ask questions like "Why did you decide to join the Mormon Church?" or "What do you like most about the Mormon Church?" You may find that the Mormon's reasons for joining or for staying center more on relationships and family than on doctrine. This can affect how you should approach witnessing to the Mormon.

"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out."

- Proverbs 18:15

Don't use any paraphrasing or quote from any Bible translation except the King James Version. - This is the only version that Mormons see as authoritative.

Do ... Help the Mormon recognize the reliability of the Bible. It is the Word of God.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." - 2 Timothy 3:16

It has unity of meaning even though written over a span of 1600 years in three different languages with 40 different authors.

- It has been meticulously preserved over time because Hebrew scribes were perfectionists in their copying of the Scriptures.
- It has manuscript evidence which far exceeds that of any other ancient writing.

The number of manuscript copies of the Scriptures surviving from antiquity down to our day far exceeds the number of manuscripts representing any other ancient writing.

Ancient Greek New Testament manuscripts or fragments have been found, numbering 5,366. Only 643 ancient copies of Homer's masterpiece The Iliad have survived. Other well-known ancient writings survive in only a handful of documents. The time span between the writing date of the oldest surviving New Testament manuscript fragment and its original writing date is 50–75 years. Most other ancient writings survive in copies made anywhere from 800 to 1300 years after their original composition.³³ No legitimate reason can be advanced for doubting both the authenticity and integrity (accurate transmission) of the New Testament.

- It can never be destroyed or lost.

"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." - Isaiah 40:8

³² Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6:305–6.

³³ The statistics in the preceding paragraph are from Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 385, 404–5, 475.

Don't believe that a testimony grounded in Scripture alone is somehow inferior to a supernatural sign-based testimony.

Supernatural and spiritual signs like a "burning in the bosom" are not required either for the Spirit to lead or for the Christian to have confidence in His leading. Indeed, Jesus taught that "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matthew 12:39, KJV). Christians trust in the promise of the Spirit to guide them into the truth.

"When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." - John 16:13

Do ... Use your personal Christian testimony.

"A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful." - Proverbs 14:25

Don't forget to be patient and pray. - *"Pray continually."* - 1 Thessalonians 5:17



← Joseph Smith, the Founder of Mormonism



Brigham Young, a leader in Mormonism →



← Moroni, who is actually a person, is also considered an "angel". Moroni had some golden plates upon which were inscribed these words of a god and given to Joseph Smith. A picture of Moroni is to the right. This statue is located on most Mormon Temples.

What You Should Do When Mormons Come Knocking

If you absolutely don't feel comfortable "witnessing" to the couple of Mormons at your door, its ok. Do be kind and say this: "Young Men, I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that has changed my life. I'm praying for you to find that. Good day! (Or, just don't answer the door.)"

If you want to interact with them, here are a couple of guidelines:

Reflect the love of Christ.

Mormons are accustomed to the blast of a slamming door. Therefore, kind and courteous communication on your part could open the door of their hearts to Christ.

Realize the Mormon perspective.

Mormonism, like many other world religions and cults, operates on a "works theology." Mormons are taught that full salvation is conditional, requiring not only God's grace but also their own obedience, performance of good works, and adherence to the rules of the Mormon Church. Their deep desire to earn salvation is probably the reason they are knocking on your door. But the Bible clearly teaches that salvation is only by God's grace through faith in Christ—not by works (Ephesians 2:8–9) and that grace and works cannot be mixed (Romans 11:6).

Recognize deviant meanings.

Mormons will use the same Christian words you do, but with different meanings. For example, "God" is not the sole being who is eternal, transcendent and all-powerful (Isaiah 45:5), but rather one of many deities who was once a man. "Jesus Christ" is not the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16) but rather one of many spirit children of Elohim (God) and his wife. Even when they are using Christian-sounding talk, Mormons are speaking a different language.

Reach out by asking questions.

When others disagreed with Him, Jesus frequently responded by asking penetrating questions. When the Mormons are explaining their teachings to you, sensitively ask, "If our works are necessary for earning salvation, doesn't that mean that Christ's Atonement is insufficient? Isn't this a type of self-righteousness? Wouldn't this make salvation by works rather than by grace?"

Refer to your Bible.

Use the King James Version if you have one. That is the only version Mormons recognize. With your Bible handy, continue to ask penetrating questions about Christ, salvation and the afterlife. For example, open your Bible and ask them to read Isaiah 44:6, "This is what the Lord says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." Then ask, "In light of this, how can members of your church become gods?" Another example: "If there are three heavens (a Mormon teaching), why does Revelation 21 speak of only one place where God will live with all believers for eternity?"

If the Mormons seem interested, write the biblical references on a piece of paper for them to take home. Don't let frustration make you harsh or overbearing. Remember, the outcome is in God's hands. Your goal is not simply to win an argument, but to cause the Mormons to question their own faith and become curious about yours.

Realize that you don't have all the answers.

If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say, "I'd be happy to get that information for you if you'd like to come back and discuss it some time." Saying this will keep the door open for future visits and also keep you from becoming defensive.

Realize that the truth can hurt.

Facing the truth about Mormonism can be very painful for a "true believer" Mormon. This may result in angry outbursts. Have compassion and patience. "A gentle answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). Be prepared to gently show the Mormon the importance of accepting truth, even when it hurts to do so.

Relate your personal testimony.

Describe what a difference Jesus has made in your life. Speak from the heart. Talk about your relationship with Christ and what He means to you.

Reinforce truth with tracts.

Many Mormons have been converted this way. They can read the tract over and over again in privacy, where the Holy Spirit can do His work.

Plant a “seed of doubt” and ask God to let it grow in them.

The chances that you will “lead a Mormon to Christ” at the door with an accountability partner with them is slim. It’s not really the goal—at the door. Just plant a “seed doubt” through your discussion. “I read that Mormons believe that when they die, they get to be God...it that true? Do you believe you get to be god someday, really?” “I heard that a Mormon wife can only go to heaven if she produced kids, what about the infertile...can they not go to heaven?” Or, “I know the Bible is written in Koiné (pronounced “COIN-a”) Greek, do you know Greek?” “Why do they call you ‘elder’ when you are so young?” (Their name tags read “Elder their name.”)

Here are some more technical questions to ask Mormons:

Here are four good questions to begin with to prepare for a conversation with a Mormon friend:

- A. do you believe it honors god to believe something that is false?
- B. How would you recognize something that is false?
- C. If there was the slightest chance that you are believing something that is false, would you want to know?
- D. If you came to realize something you believed was false, what would you do?

Do you really want to base your salvation on a book that has had over 4,000 changes introduced into it since its initial publication? [BG: Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 4:46 states, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its’ precepts, than by any other book.”]

Your documents say there was a large-scale war culminating in a conflict in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed in AD 385 near Hill Cumorah in New York, why hasn’t any archeological evidence—from non-Mormon archeologists—been revealed that such a conflict occurred?

There are many North American cities mentioned in the book of Mormon. Why is there no archeological evidence for any of them like there is in the Christian Bible for Israel and the Middle East?

In view of the fact that many of Mormonism’s key doctrines are nowhere to be found within the pages of the Book of Mormon, How can it be claimed that the Book of Mormon is the “fullness of the everlasting gospel?”

I have a question about this verse from your scriptures: Not that I’m giving credence to the Book of Mormon, but it says, ‘For I know that God is ...neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity’ (Moroni 8:18). How do you reconcile that with the current Mormon view that God was once a man and evolved to become a God?

If you believe in celestial marriage, why did Jesus say that a man would not be marriage in heaven (cf., Luke 20:34-36).

*Have you ever committed the same sin twice? (yes)... Then, how do you reconcile with Spencer W. Kimball’s statement, “The forsaking of sin must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit making the same mistake again.” (President Kimball was the 12th Mormon president. Quote source: *Repentance brings forgiveness*, an unnumbered LDS track)*

As a good Mormon, would you say that you have kept all the LDS commandments? (no)... The, how do you reconcile with Russell M. Nelson statement, “To prepare to meet God, one keeps all of His commandments.” (President Russell M. Nelson was the 17th Mormon president. Quote source: “Face the Future with faith,” Ensign (Conference Edition), may 2011, p. 34, [Underline in the original].)

Isaiah 43:10, in the King James Version, says, “Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.” Since there are no god’s before him and no god’s after Him, this means that none of His children can become Gods. Such a verse makes the Mormon viewpoint to achieving godhood impossible.

Guys, can I share with you something we are learning at our church. You can’t be saved by works! If you could, then Jesus’ own words about being saved by faith would have to be deceptive. Here’s where you need to know: 1. God loves you guys. 2. All have sinned. 3. Jesus died on the cross to make sure nothing would separate you from Him. There is no other way to be saved but through Jesus. 4. You need to make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. 5. There is no other way—faith alone; not works. 6. Would you pray right now by faith and receive Christ as Lord?

Mormons believe that Jesus had brothers (Lucifer/Satan being one of them). In John 3 16, it says that "For God so loved the world, that He gave His ONLY begotten son..." How can he have full brothers if He is the only begotten son of God?

The first commandment is "You shall have no other God's before (Hebrew lit., 'in my presence') me." How do you account for a theological belief system that believes in many gods?

Where is the planet Kolob?

Background: According to this work, Kolob is the heavenly body nearest to the throne of God. It's also the planet that Jesus allegedly came from, having complete the highest level in their celestial (ie., eternal) progression. According to several Mormon writers (such as W. Cleon Skousen in his book *The First 2000 Years*), the Earth was created near Kolob over a period of 6000 years, and then moved to its present position in our solar system.³⁴ According to Mormon cosmology, there was a pre-existence, or a pre-mortal life, in which human spirits were literal children of heavenly parents. Although their spirits were created, the essential "intelligence" of these spirits is considered eternal, and without beginning. During this pre-mortal life, a Plan of Salvation was presented by God the Father (Elohim) with Jehovah (the premortal Jesus) championing moral agency and "wanting to break away from his (pre-immortal Jesus) easily besetting sin of lust," but Lucifer (Satan) insisting on its exclusion. When Lucifer's plan was not accepted, he rebelled against God the Father and was cast out of heaven, taking "the third part" of the hosts of heaven with him to the earth, thus becoming the tempters.³⁵ The doctrine of eternal progression was succinctly summarized by LDS Church leader Lorenzo Snow: "*As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be.*"³⁶ Meaning, as Jesus is a God, we will also become a god. As we are now, just mortal men, Jesus was once just like us—mortal, not immortal. Exalted beings will live forever with God the Father and Jesus Christ, will become gods and goddesses,³⁷ will live with their righteous earthly families members, and will received the fullness of Jesus enjoyed by God and Christ. This honor of become a God is reserved for only those in a celestial marriage.³⁸ Those who are exalted are said to inhabit the "highest degree" of the celestial kingdom.³⁹ (If Mormons say that the church no longer teaches that men will become god's, this I ask, "If Jesus God?" (NOTE: Technically, Jesus is "god" of this earth but not god of the entire universe.)

How do you reconcile that your own (Mormon) DNA studies disproves that the Lamanites (migrating Israelis) are the principal ancestors of the American Indians?

With the advances in modern science, biologists have made remarkable progress in tracing human migratory patterns based on identifiable gene markers contained within mitochondrial DNA. Of particular interest to Americans (and to Latter-day Saints) was the origin of Native Americans—long hypothesized to have migrated from Asia over the Bering Strait several thousand years ago. This widely accepted theory contradicts the Book of Mormon's (and prophets and apostles of the LDS Church) teachings that American Natives are the descendants of Semitic migrants who arrived here approximately 590 BCE. Presently, DNA evidence indicates Native Americans descended from Asia, not Israel as the BOM teaches. Asian migrants have populated this continent for over 50,000 years. The thousands of DNA samples from every known tribe of Native Americans indicate an Asiatic rather than Semitic origin and give greater support to the theory of a prehistoric Asiatic migration across the Bering Strait. (In an essay

³⁴ Evans, Charles D. (1894), "Matter and Spirit", *Millennial Star*, p. 778-779; cf., "The earth doubtless fell also an immeasurable distance from the presence of its Maker, from the mansion or abode of Kolob." Et., exegeting the Book of Abraham chapters 5 and 6.

³⁵ LDS Church (1995), *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*, Salt Lake City, Utah: LDS Church; LDS Church 1995 ("Each [human] is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents."); and LDS Church (2009) p. 9 ("Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father.").

³⁶ Millet, Robert L.; Reynolds, Noel B. (1998), "*Do Latter-day Saints believe that men and women can become gods?*", *Latter-day Christianity: 10 Basic Issues*, Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

³⁷ LDS Church (2009), pp. 275-280.

³⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-3.

³⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 131.4.

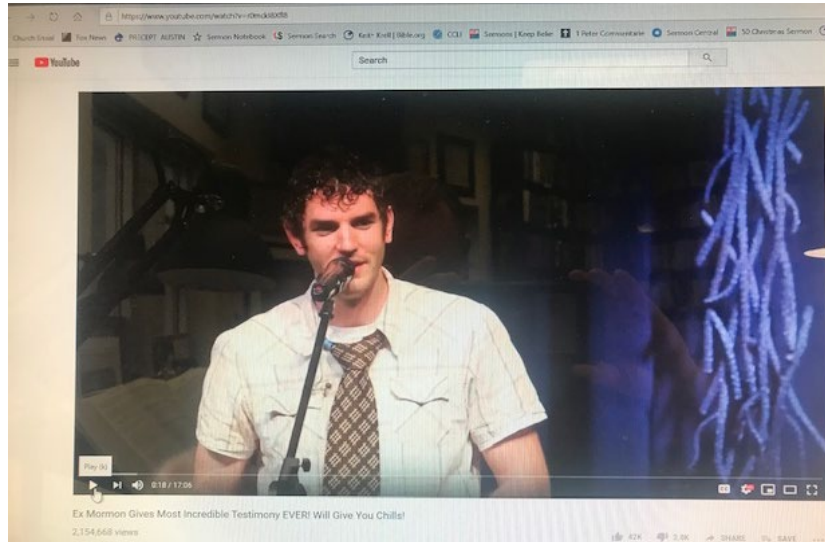
released by the LDS Church in 2014, "Book of Mormon and DNA Studies," they agree that "The evidence assembled to date suggests that the majority of Native Americans carry largely Asian DNA."⁴⁰

Ask any male Mormon, "When you die, do you really believe you get to be god?" [Remember, Mormon's believe that when a good, male Mormon dies, they get to achieve 'godhood' via celestial progression.]

I have listened to you for sometime now, would you listen to something for me and come back and talk to me about it?

Asked them to watch this video:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0mckl8Xfl8>



Ultimately, I asked to Mormon friend to consider something, I say, "Would you please go back and read the New Testament as a child?" Write down the following verses and give it to them and asked to read it as a child without any preconceived ideas. Ask them to read it for themselves from their own Bibles—again, *just as a child*:

Ephesian 2:8-9

Galatians 2:21

Romans 3:20

Romans 8:3

Romans 9:16

Romans 4:1-7

Romans 3:20-30

Galatians 5:2

Galatians 5:4

Acts 13:39

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Galatians 2:16

Galatians 3:10-12

Galatians 3:21

Galatians 5:9-10

Galatians 5:6

Galatians 6:15

Philippians 3:3-9

Colossians 2:20-23

2 Timothy 1:9

Titus 3:4-5

Hebrews 4:3-10

Hebrews 6:1-2

James 2:10-11

Luke 18:9-14

Isaiah 64:6

⁴⁰ Whiting, Michael F. "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective." Journal of Book of Mormon Studies. Jan 1, 2003, vol. 12, issues 1:24-25; also cf., <http://www.mormonthink.com/essays-bom-dna.htm>

Remain encouraged.

Mormon missionaries are rarely converted while making house calls. However, the Holy Spirit can use your penetrating questions, the gospel tract and your loving spirit to soften their hearts.

Remember to pray.

Pray for the visitors who have knocked on your door. God may have arranged for you to have a special encounter with those who are ready to open the door of their hearts to Christ. "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).



This is important: You may not reach a Mormon for Christ—at the door. Your goal is to playfully plant the "seed doubt". You may be able to reach a friend or co-worker, who is a Mormon, at work or across the street. Pray for a divine appointment and ask God to give you the right words. They may not really understand what Mormon's believe or may not feel they "live up" to the standards of Mormonism. The simple gospel of Christ that you have is just what they need. Let God open that important door. Pray, pray, and pray!



SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CONCERN:

My primary issue with any religious institution that promotes a "work-based" means of being saved is that His (Christ's) blood and His Word was not enough. With Mormon theology, I'm also grieved God's Son was not enough. The Jesus of Mormonism is not the Jesus of Christianity. (Jesus was *never us* and we will *never be Him*. Jesus has always been holy, is holy and will—forever—be holy. We are *declared holy* only by the grace of God—not our works!)

- Pastor Joe

Ephesians 2:8–9, NASB95 -⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Isaiah 64:6, NASB95 -⁶ *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*

Romans 3:20, NASB95 -²⁰ *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*

2 Timothy 1:9, NASB95 -⁹ *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,*

Galatians 2:16, NASB95 - ¹⁶ *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*

Romans 3:20–30, NASB95 - ²⁰ *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin...;* ²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ²⁴ *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ...* ²⁷ *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.* ²⁸ *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

Romans 8:3, NASB95 - ³ *For what the Law could not do is save you, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin....*

Romans 11:6, NASB95 - ⁶ *But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works one is saved, otherwise grace is no longer grace.*

When Mormon Missionaries come knocking at the door, remember what their goal is.

For the homeowner (or the personal answering the door), they are called “investigators.” The kind, friendly moral Mormon missionaries that knock on your door will try to convince you of three things:

- 1. They will want to convince you that there was a “complete apostasy” of the Christian Church.**
- 2. They will want to convince you that the Book of Mormon is a work from God.**
- 3. They will want to convince you that the gospel has been “restored” by god through Joseph Smith.**

“Investigators must be told that a universal apostasy occurred following the death of Jesus and His Apostles. If there had been no apostasy, there would have been no need of a Restoration”

- Preach My Gospel, 2004, p. 36. (A Mormon Publication)

- They will typically start by asking you about the book or Mormon.

Response: I have not read all the book of Mormon but I assume you have. Why do you feel this book is so important? Why does it have to say that I need to know?

If it speaks of ancient prophets, where exactly did these people live on the American continent? What evidence does your church have to support their existence?

Strongest Resources on Mormonism and Mormonism Theology.

Mormon Think (www.mormonthink.com)

Mormonism Research Ministry (www.mrm.org)

Living Hope Ministries (www.lhvm.org)

Book: Answering Mormon's Questions by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson (ISBN 978-0-8254-4268-1)

Book: Sharing the Good News with Mormon's by Eric John & Sean McDowell (ISBN 978-0-7369-7406-6)

Book: The 10 Most Important Things you can say to a Mormon by Ron Rhodes (ISBN 0-7369-0534-0)

Book: Mormonism Unmasked by R. Philip Roberts (ISBN 080541652-8)

Summary Timeline: The Development of the Mormon Church

December 23, 1805	Birth of Joseph Smith, Jr. in Sharon, Vermont.
Spring, 1820	First vision of Joseph Smith. As an adult, Smith claims that when he was fourteen years old, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared in the "Sacred Grove," telling him that all churches were wrong and that he was later to restore the only true church. (Earlier versions of the same story contained different and contradictory accounts.)
September 21–23, 1823	The second vision is the angel Moroni, the son of the prophet Mormon, telling Joseph Smith where to locate the golden plates on which is engraved the Word of God in reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics.
September 22, 1827	Moroni grants Joseph Smith permission to translate the plates with the aid of magical glasses, which he calls Urim and Thummim. As Joseph Smith sits on one side of a tall curtain, he dictates the Book of Mormon to friends such as Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, who serve as scribes.
May 15, 1829	The third vision of Joseph Smith is John the Baptist, telling him that he and Cowdery are to baptize and ordain each other into the Aaronic priesthood.
April 6, 1830	Mormonism, then called Church of Christ, is officially organized with six charter members.
1831	The Mormons move to Kirkland, Ohio. The first temple is established.
1832	The Mormons move to Independence, Missouri, to their new Jerusalem, their new "Zion," which Smith claims is the original Garden of Eden and will be the location of Christ's return and reign during the millennium.
1838–39	Joseph Smith is imprisoned in Missouri. After escaping from jail and rejoining Mormons who were driven from Missouri into Illinois, Smith directs church land purchases and builds up the town of Nauvoo.
June 27, 1844	Smith unveils new doctrines: Baptism for the dead and Celestial Marriage (for time and all eternity, and plural). Latter doctrine sparks controversy leading to the murder of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum by an angry mob in Carthage, Illinois.
1846–47	Driven by mob violence from Nauvoo, Brigham Young leads the Mormons on a treacherous journey to the great Salt Lake in Utah, founding Salt Lake City.
1890	Mormon President Wilford Woodruff issues a Manifesto denying charges of recent plural marriages in the Church and saying his "advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land" (emphasis added). Polygamy continues covertly until 1904. Splinter groups still practice polygamy.
1947	The Mormon Church reaches one million in membership.
1976	Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine is officially denounced by Mormon Prophet Spencer W. Kimball during General Conference.
1978	Mormon Prophet Spencer W. Kimball receives a new revelation allowing black men to hold the Mormon Priesthood for the first time.
1982	The Mormon Church reaches five million in membership.
1997	The Mormon Church reaches ten million in membership.
2004	The Mormon Church reaches eleven million in membership.
2014	The Mormon Church is estimated to reach twelve million members

Summary Chart: Christianity v. Mormonism

	Biblical Christianity	Mormonism—Latter-day Saints
Key Person Founder, Date, Location	Jesus Christ. Founded about AD 30-33, in the Judean province of Palestine (Israel today), under the Roman Empire. Followers of Jesus Christ became known as Christians in the Book of Acts.	Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844), founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in 1830 in New York. Headquarters are in Salt Lake City, UT
Key Writings	The Bible, written originally in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament).	The Book of Mormon; Doctrine and Covenants; Pearl of Great Price; the Bible (King James Version only or Smith's "Inspired Version"); authoritative teachings of Mormon prophets and other LDS "general authorities."
Who is God	The one God is Triune (one God in three Persons, not three gods): God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Often the title "God" designates the first Person, God the Father—the creating God. God is a spiritual being without a physical body. He is personal and involved with people. He created the universe out of nothing. He is eternal, changeless, holy, loving and perfect.	God the Father was once a man, but "progressed" to godhood. He has a physical body, as does his wife (Heavenly Mother), No Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate gods. Worthy men may one day become gods themselves through a process called "celestial progression".
Who is Jesus	Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity—God the Son. As God the Son, He has always existed and was never created. He is fully God and fully man (the two natures joined, not mixed). As the second Person of the Trinity, He is coequal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. In becoming man, He was "begotten" through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus is the only way to the Father, salvation, and eternal life. He died on a cross according to God's plan, as full sacrifice and payment for our sins. He rose from the dead on the third day, spiritually and physically immortal. For the next 40 days He was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses. His wounds were touched and He ate meals. He physically ascended to Heaven. Jesus will come again visibly and physically at the end of the world to establish God's eternal kingdom and judge the world.	Jesus is a separate god from the Father (Elohim). He was created as a spirit child by the Father and Mother in Heaven, and is the "elder brother" of all men and spirit beings. His body was created through sexual union between Elohim and Mary. Jesus was married. His death on the cross does not provide full atonement for all sin, but does provide everyone with resurrection. Jesus had brothers, Satan being one of them.
Who is the Holy Spirit	The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Trinity—God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or energy field. He comforts, grieves, reproves, convicts, guides, teaches, and "indwells" Christians.	The "holy spirit" is different from the "Holy ghost." The "holy spirit" is not God, but is an influence or electricity-like emanation from God (or "light of Christ").
How to be Saved	Salvation is by God's grace, not by an individual's good works. Salvation must be received by faith. People must believe in their hearts that Jesus died for their sins and physically rose again, which is the assurance of forgiveness and resurrection of the body. This is God's loving plan to forgive sinful people.	Resurrected by grace, but saved (exalted to godhood) by works, including faithfulness to church leaders, Mormon baptism, tithing, ordination, marriage, and secret temple rituals. No eternal life with Mormon membership.
What happens after Death	Believers go to be with Jesus. After death, all people await the final Judgment. Both saved and lost people will be resurrected. Those who are saved will live with Jesus in Heaven. Those who are lost will suffer the torment of eternal separation from God (Hell). Jesus' bodily resurrection guarantees believers that they too will be resurrected and receive new immortal bodies.	Eventually nearly everyone goes to one of three separate heavenly "kingdoms," with some achieving godhood. Apostates and murderers go to "outer darkness."
Other facts, beliefs, or practices	Group worship, usually in churches. No secret rites. Baptism and Lord's Supper (Communion). Active voluntary missionary efforts. Aid to those in need; the poor, widows, orphans, and downtrodden. Christians believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah promised to Israel in the Old Testament (Tanakh). Jesus said His followers would be known by their love for one another.	No alcohol, tobacco, coffee or tea. Baptism on behalf of the dead. Two-year missionary commitment encouraged. Door-to-door proselytizing. Secret temple rituals available only to members in good standing. Extensive social network. People of African ancestry were not granted full access to Mormon priesthood and privileges until 1978.

Listening Notes:

Summary of Video: "Understanding Mormons—The Mormon Puzzle"

This is the official video of Southern Baptists produced by the North American Mission Board

These "Listening Notes" are provided as an additional resource.

(Source: The Mormon Puzzle Video, ISBN # 1-59312-05-1-6)

- Common sight-clean cut young men in white shirts and ties knocking on doors, these are Mormon missionaries spreading the message of LDS.
- Headquarters, Salt Lake City, oversee rapidly expanding empire.
- Little over 180 years ago founded by Joseph Smith in Palmyra, NY; Membership today 11,000,000, more than 58,000 missionaries in field; Missionaries target for conversion members of main line churches.
- Just a few decades ago, the Mormon Church committed considerable resources to gaining acceptance as a Christian movement and/or protestant church. It raises the question "Is Mormonism authentically Christian?"
- Quote: Sandra Tanner, Director, Utah Lighthouse Ministry, "Mormonism is truly a different religion. It isn't just a branch of Christianity. Its theology is so radically different, so different it is as close to Christianity as Hinduism..."
- They use biblical terms common to us all. Mormons have the meanings behind these terms and they are miles away from our understanding. When Mormons speak about the word of God for example, the 4 authoritative books: King James Bible but only if interpreted correctly; the Book of Mormon claims to be another testament of Jesus Christ on this continent; Doctrine and Covenants containing modern revelations by God as given to Joseph Smith and others; and the Pearl of Great Price containing additional revelations claimed by Joseph Smith to be ancient records sanctioned by God. These are their scriptures.
- President of the Mormon Church is seen as a modern day prophet who receives additional revelations from God.

Mormon Doctrine

- Godhead=3 distinct separate gods.
 - Father-exalted man, body of skin and bones
 - Son-flesh & bones
 - Holy ghost-spirit
- Heavenly father was once a man as we are. Lived on another planet, has a wife, and is our heavenly parent.
- Jesus Christ was born on earth as a result of a unique relationship between heavenly father and Mary, and is the literal offspring of God.
- After Jesus' birth he progressed into a divine person totally separate from God. Gospels refer to Mormon doctrines and Mormon commandments.
- According to doctrine, Jesus' atonement brought general salvation and with it resurrection for ALL people. Those who do not join the Mormon Church and unfaithful Mormons will enter a lower level of heaven. Only faithful Mormons enter highest heaven where they can progress to become gods themselves capable of populating and ruling their own world.
- They do not embrace biblical view of God, Jesus Christ, or the gospels.
- They desire to be seen not as a cult, but as mainstream Christians. They refer to themselves as being "Mormon Christians."
- There is no archeological evidence to support the stories, claims, and/or historical records in the Book of Mormon.
- There is *no independent record* outside of Joseph Smith.

Understanding Mormonism

History of church

- Joseph Smith, 14 years old, went to a grove to pray which church he should join.
- He had revelation of 2 separate beings, heavenly father and Jesus Christ, telling him not to join any church as they were all wrong and their creeds were an abomination in their sight. He would be, in due time, called to restore true Christianity to earth. 3 years later Maroni showed

golden plates with religious history of ancient civilization in the Americas. 1827 miraculously able to translate plates in engrave in reformed Egyptian. 1830 published first book of Mormon. John the Baptist appeared and bestowed the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood on him. Peter, James and John bestowed the power of Melchizedek into a new Priesthood. This line of priesthood was lost because of apostates for 1500 years, then, these priesthood authorities were restored in 1830 when Joseph Smith organized what he called The Restored Church of Christ. It becomes known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

- The founding membership consisted of Smith and 5 others.
- Mormons view Joseph Smith as a modern prophet, same as Moses and Isaiah in their days. He was the single individual contacted and who through the Lord worked to restore the fullness of the gospel. That through him the true gospel has been restored in the later days, per Stephen Robinson, Chairman Department of ancient Scripture, BYU.
- Quote: Phil Roberts, director, Interfaith Witness, NAMB, "Joseph Smith saw the tension between various denominations as a real problem for his own joining of a particular group or denomination. However, when he was able to claim that I have the one true church, I have the basic invitation or command from God to begin that church or to establish that church, then he solved what he thought was the best way to start the one true church, which was the Mormon Church."
- Quote: Sandra Tanner: "No admiration for JS, as he started out as a money digger, a soothsayer, palm reader, and developed his idea of religion, writing a book that he claimed was scripture."
- Quote: Phil Roberts, director, Interfaith Witness, NAMB: "By doing that he was able to claim first of all a new canon for the church, a new authority over the church that would set itself over completely against all other churches and denominations."
- Sandra Tanner: "We do find a man who has tremendous energy, imagination, who is creative, but who is also somewhat of a scoundrel. For instances, he was involved in magical practices, he was continually rewriting his revelations, he was changing his doctrine. He went on to set up a secret theocratic government, he has himself ordained king. This is a man who is very hungry for power."
- Joseph Smith left New York and moved to Kirkland, OH and various places in Missouri due to opposition. 1839 settled on banks of Mississippi River establishing community of Nauvoo, IL. 1840 introduced secret teachings in church; most notorious was plural marriage or polygamy.
- In 1844, group of dissenters set up a newspaper exposing secret practices. Joseph Smith ordered the destruction of the press, which led to his arrest and imprisonment in Carthage, IL.
- In June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother were killed by an angry mob storming the jail. A martyr for the Mormon faith was established forever.
- Brigham Young became leader, an apostle of the church and led 600 people west, looking for sanctuary. July 1847 settled in Great Salt Lake Valley.
- In the past, the church stressed difference between traditional Christianity and Mormonism. Now, for better acceptance and with large sums of money, they emphasize points in commonality with Christianity. They are striving to be seen as "just another Christian denomination." This strategy seems to be working.
- Quote: Robert Millet, Dean of Religious Education, BYU: "If anything we say we are Christians because we are. With the Bible, the Book of Mormon stands as a strong witness of Jesus Christ. He is the central character, the person towards whom they all looked. We believe that Jesus will come again one day. That he will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So, behavior, belief, theology, practice, Jesus Christ is the central figure of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. If that is acceptable Christianity, so be it."

Stated Beliefs:

- The Book of Mormon (an ancient record of Christians who lived on this continent), Doctrines and Covenants (revelations to Joseph Smith), and Pearl of Great Price (an inspired version of ancient documents which were restored in the latter days), all in one volume.
- Believe in Bible, but only if it is translated correctly. They will give you a Book of Mormon, but main doctrine comes from The Doctrine and Covenants, written by Joseph Smith and he talks about concept of priesthood, that God has a body, the Mormons three levels of heaven, and about baptism of the dead. But also one of the most notorious sections, 132 that teaches polygamy and temple marriage which gives them the right to be a couple in the ever after and have children in the next life. The Pearl of Great Price has two main sections, the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham. The Book of Abraham claims to be a translation of actual papyrus that Joseph Smith purchased in the 1830. It dates to the time of Christ and is the funerary document of the Egyptians, part of their Book of the Dead. It has nothing to do with Abraham.
- In the 1830s no one could read papyrus so Joseph Smith "deciphered" them as Abraham's time in Egypt.

- Ancient Jews warned by God to flee the destruction of ancient Jerusalem by Babylonian in 857 BC, They were told to flee from the Babylonians across the ocean to the new world where they established a civilization which had prophets and knew of the coming of the Savior just as the prophets of the Old Testament. This Jewish pre-Christian civilization received a ministry from the Savior himself after the resurrection and he established his church and doctrine among them. The Book of Mormon gives that history of the 1000 year period from 600 BC to 400 AD when ancient Americans were in the prophetic and Christian mode and received revelations from God about Christ and His eternal gospel.

- Quote: Phil Roberts, director, Interfaith Witness, NAMB: "No evidence that anything beyond the claim of Joseph Smith exists. In terms of the Book of Mormon, there are no ancient manuscripts of the Book of Mormon or parts of the Book of Mormon, or even fragments of the Book of Mormon have ever been located. When it comes to the New Testament, we have over 5000 manuscripts and fragments of the New Testament from the first century. But we cannot find, nor has there ever been located any manuscript or fragment of the Book of Mormon in the Western Hemisphere."

- Sandra Tanner: "No historical support for the story. No maps, no artifacts, no specific city, nothing that ties in to this culture in any way. No independent record outside of Joseph Smith to substantiate that such a culture existed. It isn't that we know nothing about the Americas, it is that everything we know about the Americas does not fit the Mormon culture."

- Mormons believe that any part of the four books that they read from are literally and totally God's word. Fully inspired and followed faithfully in all points of belief and practice.

- Most important LDS authority is not found in a book. The president of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, his two counselors and the 12 apostles have the capability of receiving new revelations from God. Thus new doctrines may come when needed and no scripture is final. They believe they are the true church because they have been reconstituted with the role of the prophet who is God's spokesman in the church. All other churches cannot be true because they do not have the office and person of the prophet present in the church to be God's spokesperson. No consistency, contradictions between prophets.

Doctrine of God

- God is an exalted man and man of holiness as he is called; possess all of the attributes of godliness, perfection and no attribute or quality that He does not possess.

- Smith taught that God was once a man as we are, dwelt on an earth as we do, and through spiritual development became God. Believe that men and women can become as God and can gain godhood.

- Mormons believe that the three members of the godhead, the trinity, the father, son and holy ghost are three separate and distinct personages. The father, a personage who has a body of flesh and bones; the son, a personage who has a body of flesh and bones; the Holy Spirit, a male personage who is a spirit, does not have a body of flesh and bones.

- Mormon proverb: As you are God once was, as God is, you can become.

- Mormons believe that Jesus existed before his mortal birth and like all human beings was born a spirit child of heavenly parents. In the case of Christ however, he was the first born of all creation. Believe that Jesus was not the son of Joseph or of the Holy Ghost, but of God. How that was accomplished we do not know. Official doctrine of the church is that Jesus is the literal son of God. Has 46 chromosomes, 23 came from Mary and 23 came from God the father. Difference in belief is that Jesus is not the same person as the father, but literally his son not just a different manifestation of the same being, but a separate person.

Doctrine of Salvation and Life after Death:

- They believe that through the blood of Jesus Christ we can be forgiven of sins, be made pure in heart, spiritually grow and develop, be born again of the spirit. To receive fullness of salvation, must have faith in Jesus Christ, repent of sins, be baptized by immersion, must receive the Holy Ghost, and continue faithfully until they receive ordinances of the temple. Certain works must be performed, morality, loyalty, tithing, chase virtuous life, live the Word of Wisdom i.e. no alcohol or smoking, coffee, tea and harmful drugs and perform temple work for the dead. Through receipts of additional sacraments and ordinances through the temple they make additional covenants with God and receive eternal life and exaltation, meaning men and women have the capacity to become "as God is." Ordinances of the temple, husbands and wives are married for time and eternity, become family units that are sealed together to eventually have their own eternal offspring, create and populate their own world.

- Not only doctrine has been restored in the latter days, but also the authority to perform the ordinances of God have been restored in the latter days. Baptism by other denominations represents a coming to Christ in a preliminary way; one comes to Christ in the fullness of the gospel through the authority of priesthood as restored in the latter days. It is necessary for a "Baptist" to be baptized again in order to achieve the Celestial Kingdom as a Latter Day Saint.

- Afterlife is defined by three levels of glory. The Celestial Kingdom achieves godhood and inherits their world. The Terrestrial Kingdom, then Telesial Kingdom. Lowest level, Telesial kingdom surpasses all knowledge.

Terrestrial kingdom will have presence of Son, fellowship with Christ.

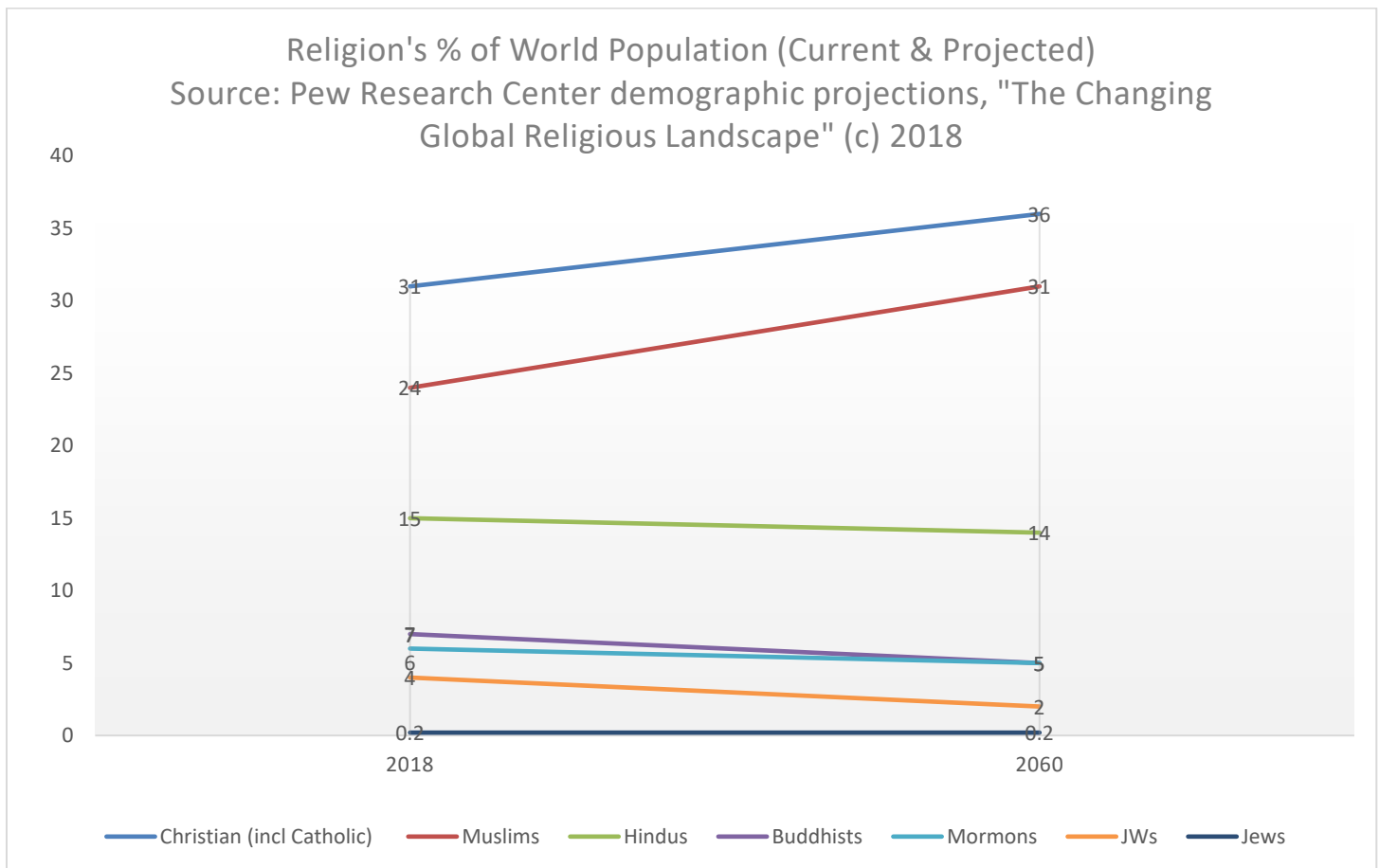
- Celestial Kingdom will have relationship with God, Jesus and Holy Ghost and have the fullness of glory. At this level the men will become gods, populating and ruling their own worlds.
- In Mormonism, works are twin sister to faith.
- It's a totally different religion than Christianity, but they use the same terms. Terms have VERY different meanings in Mormonism.
- Mormons do not embrace a Biblical view of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Ghost, faith, resurrection.

How to Witness to Mormons

- Remember, Mormons are lost people.
- Reach out to Mormons, be their friend, share with them little pieces of your faith.
- Don't be afraid to talk with a Mormon. Become their friend.
- Find what you have in common (moral values) and draw into conversation. There are great differences in doctrines.
- You will need to be well equipped with a good knowledge of your own faith. Know what you believe about God, know who God is, know who Jesus is, know who the Holy Spirit is, and what the Gospel is.
- It's important to remember that Mormons use same terminology. Gospel, faith, grace, being saved and Jesus mean completely different things.
- Be well grounded in word of God. Have some knowledge of Mormonism. Know they worship a different God, a different Jesus, a different plan of salvation. Only need these doctrines. You are equipped with the real God and are able to share the real God and real Jesus
- Be knowledgeable of how to ask a person to receive Christ after a simple presentation of the Gospel, of Jesus having died for him, Jesus having risen for him, and Jesus being ready to forgive him, change him. Be able to ask the person if he is ready to receive that free gift that Jesus Christ has paid for. When person responds and is ready to pray, you be ready to pray with him and welcome him into the faith. You can be an effective witness to a Mormon.
- It takes a lot of time outside of Sunday to be a "good" Mormon. Good works are very important, the harder we try the more pleased God will be.
- Share testimony. Emphasize the testimony of grace, of how God has touched you by grace and you have come to a relationship with Jesus.
- They are trying to earn their "right" to a kingdom. They do not know acceptance and peace of God. Present that you are saved by grace of Jesus Christ. We have a message that all you have to do is by faith accept Jesus and receive that free gift from Him. Share the grace.
- You are called to tell the simple truth of the Gospel. Prayer is necessary to win any Mormon to the Christ.
- Mormons are gaining converts but from people who do not know the Bible. Cults flourish because of Biblical illiteracy. Anyone who knows their Bible cannot be converted to Mormonism because Mormonism is a non-Biblical, non-Christian counterfeit church.
- Winning missionaries is extremely difficult. They have a back-up person, there are two of them, they encourage each other, and they will discuss things after they leave. They are skilled and trained in talking to people about their faith. They are trained in debate even more than theology.
- If a Mormon is in situation and not comfortable, they will give their testimony which is: They believe in Joseph Smith, that he was a true prophet, and that you believe that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is the one true church.
- Forces are formidable that draw well-meaning people into believing the erroneous gospel of LDS. It's not in the power of men to prevail against them. People entangled in the Mormon net of non-Biblical teaching have little chance of escaping unless they experience the power of God through the Holy Spirit and His son Jesus Christ who for them won the victory over the forces of darkness.
- Mormons need desperately the good news of the Gospels and of Jesus Christ. We must do all that we can with compassion and gentleness to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

[END OF VIDEO]

Growth Projections of Different Religions (Current and Projected)



Notes:

There are 14.8 million Mormons with 57% living outside the US. Approximately 30% of LDS regularly attend services. LDS are 87% white—worldwide. (LDS.org)

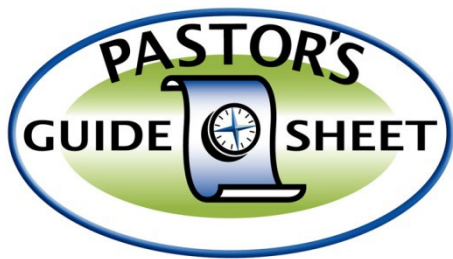
Catholics make up 1.1 billion people and comprise 50% of all Christians worldwide (that's 16% of the world's population.) (Catholic.org.)

There are roughly 51 million Catholics in the US. (Approximately 21% of the population.) (As of 2014, 59% were white, 34% were Hispanic, 3% were black, 3% were Asian.) There are approximately 150 million Protestants in the US (about 20% of the US population.) (Pew Research)

As of 2017, there are approximately 3.45 million Muslims in the United States. They are, statically, the fastest growing religious group in the US—growing at about 10% per year. (Pew Research)

"Christianity" (if you include, Catholics, all non-Catholic groups, including JW's, LDS's, CS, etc.) is dropped from 78.4% in 2012 to 70.4% today (projected by Pew Research).

There are approximately 60 'major' Christian denominations with about 384 thousand churches in the US. Sadly, though Christianity is growing at a modest 5% per year (due primarily to non-denominational churches), the overall number of churches has dropped from 30 thousand in the past six years—that 5 thousand churches that close every year in the US (due to the growth of mega churches and the influence they have over smaller churches. (Christianity Today Research)



Mormonism

ADDENDUM A

Version F

This PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV @jtaylor@southreno.com • Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

Section One: The Golden Plates

Specific Quotes:

After removing the plates from the stone box, Joseph hid them in a birch log until preparations could be made at home for the plates. then he went to retrieve them...the plates were secreted about three miles from home...Joseph, on coming to them, took them from their secret place, and wrapping them in his linen frock, placed them under his arm and started for home...after proceeding a short distance, he thought it would be more safe to leave the road and go through the woods. Traveling some distance after he left the road, he came to a large windfall, and as he was jumping over a log, a man sprang up from behind it, and gave him a heavy blow with a gun. Joseph turned around and knocked him down, then ran at the top of his speed. About half a mile further he was attacked again in the same manner as before; he knocked this man down in like manner as the former, and ran on again; and before he reached home he was assaulted the third time. In striking the last one he dislocated his thumb, which, however, he did not notice until he came within sight of the house, when he threw himself down in the corner of the fence in order to recover his breath. As soon as he was able, he arose and came to the house."

- Lucy Mack Smith, mother of Joseph Smith, in *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, 1853, pp. 104-105. ⁴¹

When first I looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me and that his name was Moroni. . . . He said there was a book deposited, **written upon gold plates**, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the sources from whence they sprang (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, by Joseph Smith, Deseret Book, 1976, pp. 11-12).

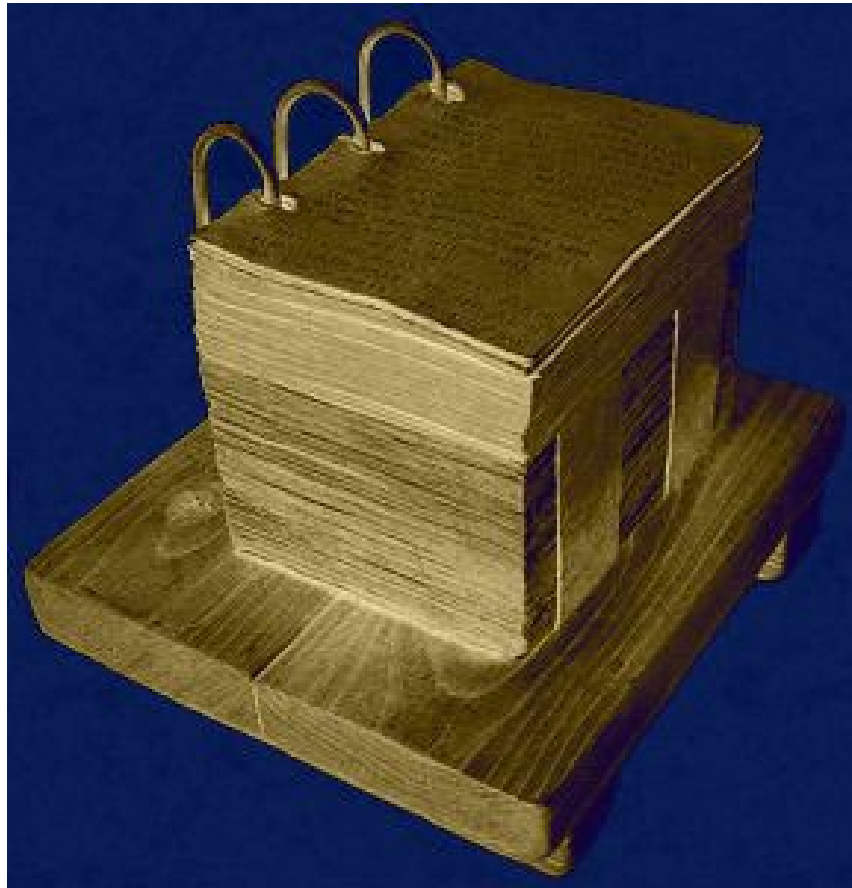
These records were engraven on plates which had **the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin**. They were filled with engravings, in **Egyptian characters**, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something **near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved** (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 537).

The plates upon which the Book of Mormon was engraved were **made of gold** and have been described as being **about six inches wide by eight inches long by six inches thick**. A cube of **solid gold** of that size, if the gold were pure, would weigh **two hundred pounds**, which would be a heavy weight for a man to carry, even though he were of the athletic type of Joseph Smith. This has been urged as an evidence against the truth of the Book of Mormon, since it is known that **on several occasions the Prophet carried the plates in his arms**. It is very **unlikely**, however, that the plates were made of **pure gold**. They would have been too soft and in danger of destruction by distortion. For the purpose of record keeping, plates made of **gold mixed with a certain amount of copper** would be better, . . . If the plates were made of

⁴¹ Lucy Mack Smith, mother of *Joseph Smith*, in *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, 1853, pp. 104-105; Comp. reprinted edition by Bookcraft Publishers in 1956 under the title *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, pp. 107- 108).

eight karat gold, which is gold frequently used in present-day jewelry, and allowing a **10 percent space between the leaves**, the total weight of the plates would not be above **one hundred and seventeen pounds**—a weight **easily** carried by a man as strong as was Joseph Smith (*Seven Claims of The Book of Mormon: A Collection of Evidences*, by John A. Widtsoe and Franklin S. Harris, Jr., Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1937, pp. 38-39).

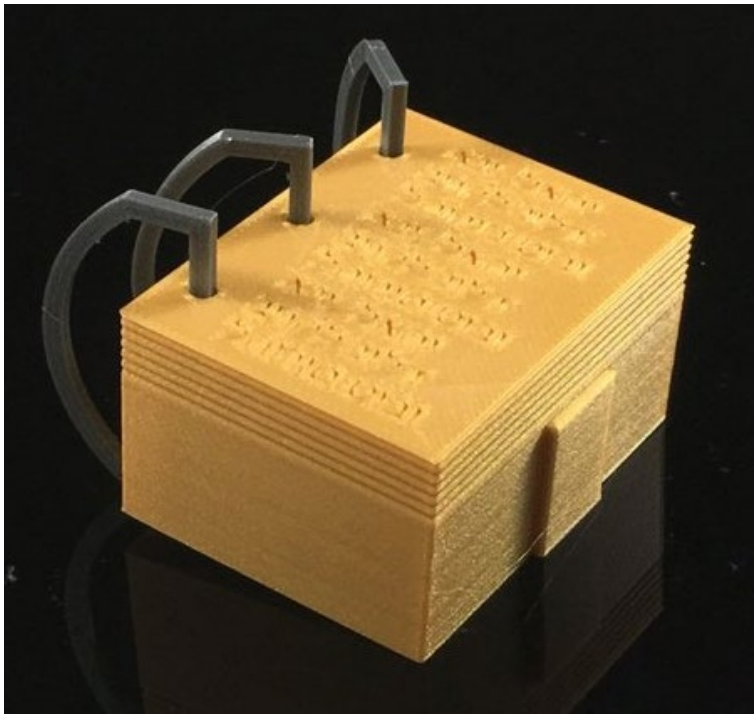
Selected Pictures:



A replica of the golden plates at Tanner's Bookstore in St. lake city, Utah.

A picture of the golden plates by Mormon Coffee (a Mormon Blog)





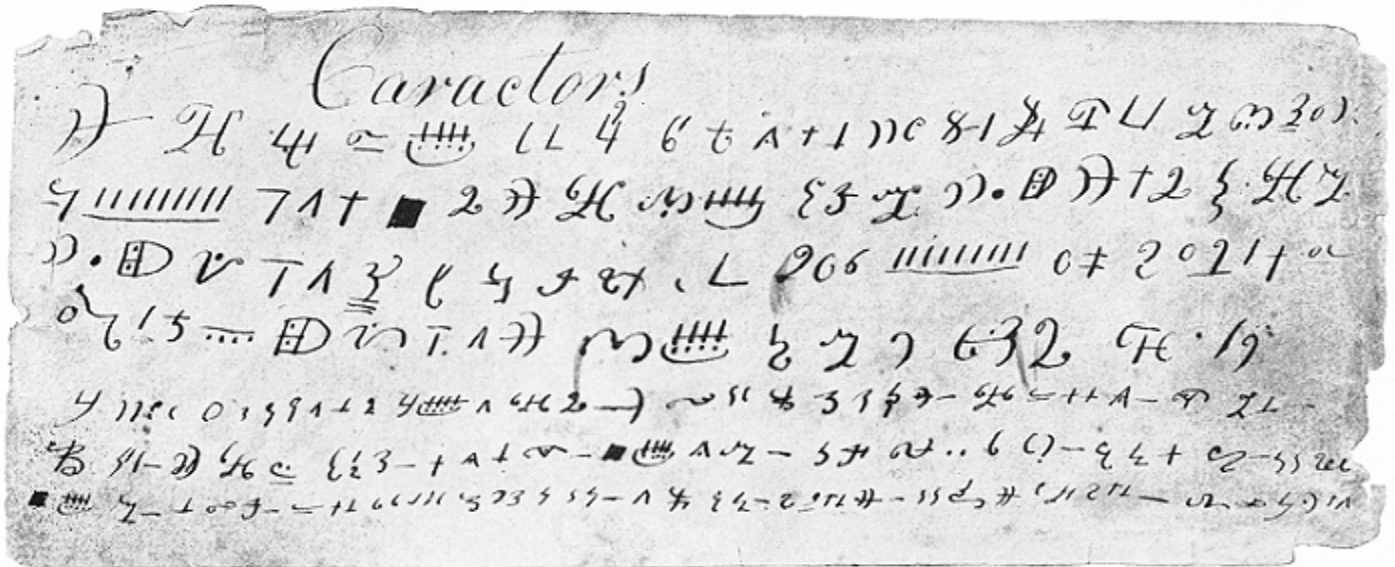
Here is a copy of the Golden Plates (plastic) from lds.org, which are for sale for \$4.50.00.

Here is a copy of "The Golden Plates" cuff links, from LDS.org which are for sale for just \$30.00 (for gold plated) or \$850.00 for solid gold (quality not specified.)



The question before us is, a volume of metal leaves six by eight by six (the Prophet Joseph), or eight by seven by four inches (Martin Harris), or eight by seven by six inches (Orson Pratt) contain a sufficient number of plates, each as thick as parchment or tin, to yield the necessary space for the entire text of the Book of Mormon? If so, what about their immense weight? Upon "a sheet of paper, eight by seven inches, a Hebrew translation of fourteen pages of the American text of the Book of Mormon has been written in the modern, square Hebrew letters in common use. . . . It is demonstrated on this sheet that the entire text of the Book of Mormon, as the American readers have it, could have been written in Hebrew on forty and three-sevenths pages—twenty-one plates in all." (Sjodahl, p. 39.) (Seven Claims of The Book of Mormon, pp. 38.)

Yet, when one looks at the sample of script that Joseph Smith copied off the plates, it has no resemblance to Hebrew and looks like it would take far more space. Below is a photo of the Book of Mormon script.



Thoughts to Ponder about the "Golden Plates":

1. There is a clear discrepancy within Mormon Documents as to the exact size the plates would have been. Some documents say "six by eight by six" (the Prophet Joseph), or "eight by seven by four inches" (Martin Harris), or "eight by seven by six inches" (Orson Pratt).
2. There is an issue as to their weight. If they were made of solid gold, in the smallest size (cf., Pratt), they would have to weigh approximately 200 lbs. If there were made of aluminum tin (which at that time, had not yet been invented) they would weigh approximately 50 lbs. If there were made of "lead drip," they would weigh about 60-125 lbs (depending of the temperature of the fire). If they were this heavy, how could Mr. Smith have carried them in linen and fought off the different attackers while running with the plates?
3. Older Mormon art "seems" to picture only 2 plates but, honestly, even the LDS church has acknowledge that there would have to have been many plates. (eg., LDS hymns speak of only 2 plates.)
4. How would one address that they were originally written in "Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics" (described as a language) and there is not historical evidence of that language? Also, why now does present the plates in the Hebrew language?
5. Where are the plate now? Where is the hat and seer stone (used to interpret the stones)?
6. If Joseph Smith looked at the 'seer stone in a hat,' why did he need the golden plates anyway?⁴²



⁴² "Mormons publish photos of 'seer stone' used by Joseph Smith". New York Post. 2015-08-04. Retrieved 2015-08-10.

Section Two: The Mormon Godhood Issue

Quotes

“While attentively listening to his explanation, the Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon me—the eyes of my understanding were opened, and I saw as clear as the sun at noonday, with wonder and astonishment, the pathway of God and man. I formed the following couplet which expresses the revelation, as it was shown me, and explains Father Smith’s dark saying to me at a blessing meeting in the Kirtland Temple, prior to my baptism. ...

“As man now is, God once was:”

“As God now is, man may be.”

“I felt this to be a sacred communication, which I related to no one except my sister Eliza, until I reached England, when in a confidential private conversation with President Brigham Young, in Manchester, I related to him this extraordinary manifestation.” (Eliza R. Snow, pp. 46–47, Brigham Young was President of the Quorum of the Twelve at the time; and, LeRoi C. Snow, Improvement Era, June 1919, p. 656; and Address by President Lorenzo Snow on Snow Day, given at Snow College, 14 May 1971, pp. 1, 3–4.)

The boy, like to his father grown,
Has but attained unto his own;
To grow to sire from state of son,
Is not 'gainst Nature's course to run.
*A son of God, like God to be,
Would not be robbing Deity.*

(Lorenzo Snow, as cited poetically in LeRoi C. Snow, p. 661. Italics added.)

“Regarding President Snow’s prophetic statement, ‘As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be,’ ...this same doctrine has of course been known to the prophets of all the ages, and President LeRoi Snow wrote an excellent poetic summary of it.” (Address at Snow College, 14 May 1971, pp. 1, 3–4.) (Now a statement from LDS.org) It is clear that the teaching of President Lorenzo Snow is both acceptable and accepted doctrine in the Church today. (cf., LDS.org; specifically <https://www.lds.org/study/ensign/1982/02/i-have-a-question/is-president-snows-statement-as-man-now-is-god-once-was-as-god-now-is-man-may-be-accepted-as-official-doctrine?lang=eng>).

Latter-Day Saints are taught that only those who are married for eternity can become as God (D&C). Only a god can have spirit children of their own. Thus, the cycle continues, as does our relationship with their Heavenly Father. Why do you think marriage is such a sacred subject in the scriptures? It is not a coincidence that our earthly marriage is a step in preparation for us to reach our full potential of becoming as God....(we) believe we (the men of the church) have the potential to become a god ourselves. It is tradition that teaches these things are not true. It is the councils of men that teach these things are not true; it is the Christian Creeds that teach these things are not true. It is the Holy Bible that teaches these things are true. (We) choose to believe what the Bible teaches. (lds.org as quoted in “fairmormon.com”, specifically <https://www.fairmormon.org/archive/publications/do-we-have-the-potential-to-become-like-god#en21>.)

Thoughts to ponder:

History: Latter-Day Saints believe that God is literally the Father of our spirits. We believe we lived in a pre-existence with Him. This pre-existence is another subject, but Jesus was once a man on the planet Kolob, when through *celestial progression*, and became god of this planet.

One Question: LDS believe we become like Jesus. If Jesus is not “god” then they do not believe they become gods; if LDS believe that Jesus is god, then we should also become gods of our own planet. I (Pastor Joe) always ask my Mormons missionary friends, *“Do you really believe that when you die, you will become God?”*

Section Three: The Corrupt Church Issue

Quote

When individuals or groups of people turn away from the principles of the gospel, they are in a state of apostasy. One example is the Great Apostasy, which occurred after the Savior established His Church. After the deaths of the Savior and His Apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in Church organization and priesthood ordinances. Because of this widespread apostasy, the Lord withdrew the authority of the priesthood from the earth. This apostasy lasted until Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820 and initiated the restoration of the fulness of the gospel.

Latter-day Saints believe that, through the priesthood conferred to Joseph Smith by the ministering of angels, the authority to act in God’s name was brought back to the earth. This is “restored,” not “reformed,” Christianity. Their belief in a restored Christianity helps explain why most Latter-day Saint converts, from the 1830s to the present, converted from other Christian denominations. None of these converts thought they were leaving Christianity; they are simply grateful to learn about, and become part of, the restored Church of Jesus Christ, which they believe offers a more complete and rich Christian Church spiritually, organizationally, and doctrinally.

During the Great Apostasy, people were without divine direction from living prophets. Many churches were established, but they did not have priesthood power to lead people to the true knowledge of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Parts of the holy scriptures were corrupted or lost, and no one had the authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost or perform other priesthood ordinances.

We now live in a time when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. But unlike the Church in times past, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will not be overcome by general apostasy. The scriptures teach that the Church will never again be destroyed (see D&C 138:44; see also Daniel 2:44).

Although there will not be another general apostasy from the truth, we must each guard against personal apostasy by keeping covenants, obeying the commandments, following Church leaders, partaking of the sacrament, and constantly strengthening our testimonies through daily scripture study, prayer, and service. (This entire section is quoted verbatim from LDS.org. specifically, <https://www.lds.org/topics/apostasy?lang=eng>; underline added).

Thoughts to Ponder

1. If the church was perverted, was the bible perverted also? If so, why does your own documents not teach that the Word of God was also perverted. If they were perverted, how were they perverted?
2. If the word of God was not perverted, why do we need “more scripture?” How can one argue that the church was perverted so we need more scriptures if the scriptures were not perverted. Could it be that the scriptures (little “s”) only became perverted because of the word of the LDS church?
3. **Doesn’t all of this come down to documentation?** (Who’s bible is right?) If the Christian Bible has so much archeological, historical, paleographical, and unified characteristics and the LDS documents have none, why would one follow them?

POINT: The church has always been “imperfect”—always—even under Christ. His Holy Word has never been corrupted—from its inception (except when cults intentionally rewrote scripture).