



## Mormonism; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS)

### Founder

- ▶ Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844)
- ▶ Married at least 34 wives (7 under the age of 18; 11 Polyandrous Marriages)

### Date

- ▶ Founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in 1830 (Palmyra, New York)

### Location

- ▶ Headquarters now in Salt Lake City, Utah.

### Key Writings

- ▶ 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 Mormonism's prophets and other "general authorities"

### Who is God?

- ▶ God the Father was once a man, but "progressed" to godhood.
- ▶ God the Father has a physical body, as does his wife (generally called "Heavenly Mother")..
- ▶ God resides near a star called Kolob.
- ▶ There is no Trinity.
- ▶ Father, Son, and "Holy Ghost" are three separate gods.
- ▶ Worthy men may one day become gods themselves.

### Who is Jesus?

- ▶ The Mormon 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.
- ▶ Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers and we were all born as siblings in heaven to them both.
- ▶ His body was created through sexual union between Elohim and Mary.
- ▶ He was married.
- ▶ His death on the cross does not provide full atonement for all sin, but does provide everyone with resurrection.

### Who is the Holy Spirit?

- ▶ In Mormonism, the "holy spirit" is different from the "Holy Ghost."
- ▶ The "holy spirit" is not God, but is instead an influence or electricity-like emanation from God.
- ▶ The "holy spirit" is also called the "light of Christ."

### How to be Saved

- ▶ No eternal life without Mormon church membership.
- ▶ People are resurrected by grace, but saved (exalted to godhood and eternal life) by works, which include...
  - Faithfulness to church leaders
  - Mormon baptism

- Tithing
- Ordination
- Marriage
- Secret temple rituals

### **What Happens After Death?**

- ▶ Eventually nearly everyone goes to one of three separate heavenly “kingdoms,” with some achieving godhood.
- ▶ The three levels of heaven are: Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial.
- ▶ “Outer darkness” is for Satan, his angels, and former Mormons who left the Church.
- ▶ The celestial kingdom is for those who accept Mormon doctrine. There are 3 levels within it, the highest of which means attaining godhood.
- ▶ The terrestrial kingdom is for good people who reject Mormon teaching on earth but later accept it in the spirit world.
- ▶ The telestial kingdom is for those who twice reject Mormon doctrine. This includes liars, adulterers, murderers, thieves, etc.

### **Other Beliefs and Practices**

- ▶ No alcohol, tobacco, coffee, or tea.
- ▶ Baptism on behalf of the dead.
- ▶ Two-year missionary commitment encouraged.
- ▶ Secret temple rituals available only to members in good standing.
- ▶ Extensive social network.
- ▶ Black men and women were not granted full access to Mormon priesthood and privileges until 1978.
- ▶ Having dark skin was a curse from God for siding with Satan before you were born.

### **Five Biblical Facts about any “Revelations”**

- ▶ God commanded us to test the spirits. (1 John 4:1)
- ▶ Nothing takes precedence over the Gospel that we have. (Galatians 1:8)
- ▶ The method of Satan is deception. We need to factor this in. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
- ▶ The basic faith is already in your possession. (Jude 3)
- ▶ The ultimate word in God’s revelation to men is His Son. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

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#### *Resource for Further Study:*

##### **Websites**

1. CES Letter (cesletter.org)
2. Mormonstories.org
3. bookofmormonplagiarism.com

##### **Books**

4. *Introducing Christianity to Mormons: A Practical and Comparative Guide to What the Bible Teaches*
5. *The Mormon Mirage: A Former Member Looks at the Mormon Church Today*
6. *Mormonism 101: Examining the Religion of the Latter-day Saints*