

## Mormonism

You might be asking why would we want to consider Mormonism or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as part of this series. There are a couple of aspects to my answer. The fastest growing and most successful cult in the history of the United States, and perhaps the world, is the Mormons. Which are officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). They have been increasing at an average rate of 300,000 converts a year (as many as 75% of whom may be former protestants. There are now more Mormons than Jews in the world.

Mormons call themselves Christians, there are Mormon places of worship near here, Portadown and Lisburn and there will be active Mormon missionaries. Our young people most likely will encounter someone at university, or we may know someone at work who is a Mormon and then there is the Internet. It may also interest you to know. [Slide 3](#)

By starting with a cult which is at arms length to us makes it possible to be objective.

In studying these cults we are retraining ourselves in what we as followers of Jesus Christ believe to be the Christian faith based on Scripture alone.

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#### I. The Beginning

##### a. Joseph Smith, Jr. (14 years old)

##### i. Vision

1. Two persons – whom he believed to be the Father and the Son – appearing before him.

2. He asked them which Christian denomination he should join and they told him to join none of them because they were all “wrong and corrupt.”

##### ii. Second Visit

1. The angel Moroni appeared at his bedside and told him of a book written on golden plates by former inhabitants, which was the fullness of the everlasting gospel.

2. Four years later Smith found the plates and started to translate them.

a. As he translated the plates he would sit behind a curtain with the plates and

dictate each line to a scribe outside the curtain.

b. He did this by using a Seer Stone, to translate the plates.

c. This translation became the book of Mormons.

iii. Later revelations

1. 1830-1840,

a. Smith continued to receive revelation that guided him in where to go and what to do next, as well as how to establish new and different doctrines.

b. Book of Commandments, 1833

c. Doctrine and Covenants, 1835

d. Both are considered inspired Scripture alongside the Book of Mormons.

2. While in Jail, 200 Mormon followers attacked the jail building and Joseph Smith died in the ensuing gunfight. Mormon claim that he died a Christian Martyr.

b. Brigham Young

i. After the death of Joseph Smith, he took over the power of the Mormons

ii. Moved the group from Illinois to the valley of the Great Salt lake in 1847

iii. Government troubles

1. The Mormons continued to have trouble with the US Government over their doctrines, mostly polygamy.

3. He also taught that Jesus had been conceived through literal sexual relations between God the Father and the Virgin Mary.

c. 20th Century

i. With the 20th century starting the Mormons strived to have a better positive public image in order to gain more converts.

ii. They claimed that Mormonism is Christianity; Christianity is Mormonism; they are one and the same.

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iii. Many of the million converts in the Mormon church today base their definition of Christian on four standard works of Scripture.

1. Bible (Which the no longer trust)

2. Book of Mormons

3. Doctrine and Covenants

4. The Pearl of Great Price

iv. The Mormons claim the biblical canon never closed and revelation

continued with Joseph Smith, as well as other presidents/prophets of the church, right up to today.

1. They only rely on the Book of Mormons, yet they have no manuscripts for it whatsoever.
2. According to Joseph Smith, the golden plates were taken back by the angel Moroni, so the Mormons simply rely on his “word as a prophet.”

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### II. Mormon Theology

a. Although Joseph Smith claimed that the Book of Mormon was the most complete book on earth and that it contains the fullness of the gospel, he added 13 key Mormon doctrines in the Doctrine and Covenants, that are not found anywhere in the BOM.

i. Some of these are:

1. Plurality of gods (polytheism)
2. God as an exalted man
3. A human being's ability to become God
4. Three degrees of heaven
5. Polygamy
6. Eternal Progression and baptism for the dead.

b. The Doctrine and Covenants also contain a number of prophecies by Smith that did not come true, which make him a false prophet, according to Duet. 18:20-22)

But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

c. A key to understanding Mormons is that they have absolutely unshakeable faith in Joseph Smith.

- i. Facts do not matter.
- ii. Whatever happened, Smith is still their source of divine revelation, the foundation of their entire viewpoint.

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### III. Eternal Progression

#### a. Doctrine of God

i. Christians say He is eternal, the only God in the universe, the supreme creator of everything out of nothing.

1. He has always been and always will be.

#### ii. Mormon doctrine of God

1. He is "Progressive," having attained His exalted state by advancing along a path that His children (Mormons) are permitted to follow.

2. They believe:

a. God – the heavenly Father – is really an exalted man.

b. He is one of a species that Mormons call gods

i. Their gods existed before the heavenly Father who rules the Earth today.

c. In Mormon thinking, God is not the eternal creator, the first cause of everything.

i. He was created or begotten Himself by another god who had been created and begotten by someone else.

3. Mormons believe that Jesus came to earth from the spirit world to become savior of mankind

#### a. His Birth

i. He was born of Mary but not conceived by the Holy Spirit as the Bible teaches.

ii. They believe that God the Father came down to Earth in human form to have sexual intercourse with Mary.

#### b. His Death

i. On the cross Jesus gained fullness

ii. He returned to heaven, fully exalted and reigns with the Father in power and glory.

iii. According the Smith, Jesus will eventually take the Father's place, as Father-God moves on to even higher realms of glory.

#### IV. Major Mormon Errors

##### a. The Trinity

i. To Mormons the trinity is not one God whose essence is found in three persons, but three God's with three distinct bodies.

##### b. Scripture

i. Mormons take standard Scripture passages that Christians use to teach the Trinity and turn them around to teach their own doctrines.

##### c. Salvation

i. According to Mormons, salvation comes in two parts: general and individual.

1. General salvation is what Mormons mean when they say, "We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved."

a. General salvation is given regardless of a person's actions or beliefs.

b. But because Christ's atonement paid for Adam's sins only, people are still responsible for their personal sin.

c. Christ's atonement provides the opportunity, then, to earn individual salvation by obeying the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

ii. Mormons list requirements that must be met if a person is to merit forgiveness from personal sins and thereby attain godhood.

1. Faith in Christ

2. Baptism

3. Member of LDS

4. Keeping the Commandments (Mormon Commands)

5. Temple Work

6. Accepting Joseph Smith, as God's mouthpiece.

#### V. The Christian Truth

##### a. Regarding Scriptures

i. The canon is closed and we accept only the Bible scriptures, believing it is God-breathed. (2 Tim 3:16)

ii. Nothing shall be added to the Scriptures (Prov. 30:6)

Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

##### b. Regarding God and the Trinity

i. God is a Spirit (John 4:24)

God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

ii. God is creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

iii. God himself says, "I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 46:9)

iv. God also said, "Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. (Isaiah 43:10)

v. The word Trinity means "three in oneness and summarizes Scripture's teaching that "God is three Persons, yet one God (Matthew 28:19)

c. Regarding sin and salvation

i. Christians believe salvation is a free gift, provided by God's grace for all who believe in Christ and His atoning work on the cross.

ii. Christians do good works not to earn salvation but because they have salvation. (Eph. 2:10)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

d. Regarding Heaven

i. Christians believe heaven is the dwelling place of God, which will become home for all believers in Christ's full atonement for personal sins.