

# The Truth About Mormonism



“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8-9)

# The Truth About Mormonism (I)

## *Introduction*

- I. Many of you have heard a knock at the door, and when you opened it you were greeted by two neatly dressed young men who ease their way into your house.
  - A. They explain that they are from the Church of Jesus Christ, and they wish to share their testimony with you.
  - B. In a short time you will learn how the ancient inhabitants got to America, and how Christ appeared to them after His resurrection.
  - C. Next they will tell you that this world is suffering from denominationalism, and ask if you think there needs to be unity in Christianity.
  - D. They will then tell you how God selected a pure young man by the name of Joseph Smith to be His spokesman, or Prophet, for our age.
  - E. They will tell you how God told Smith to “restore” the church which had fallen into apostasy—including the restoration of the offices of apostles and prophets—and this restoration was to be aided by the Book of Mormon.
- II. These men are from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with imposing headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah.
  - A. Most people refer to this group as “the Mormon church,” but this is not how they prefer to be recognized.
  - B. They do accept the term “Mormonism” to describe the combination of doctrine, culture and lifestyle which is unique to that group.
  - C. The largest of the cults, Mormonism has grown with exceeding speed to a worldwide membership of over 11 million people—yet it began in America in 1830 with just six members.
- III. This lesson is not intended to be an “attack” upon Mormons, but rather an attempt to obey the command of 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
- IV. In order to understand Mormon doctrines, and how they affect the lives of their adherents, we must first give some thought to the men who started their church and how they “revealed” their “special revelations” from God.
  - A. I will not be quoting from the enemies of the LDS church, for I realize they would not accurately represent them.
  - B. However, I will be quoting from official Mormon books, tracts, and their Web site as well as from several historical documents that be seen in libraries and court houses today.

## *Discussion*

### **I. The History Of Mormonism**

- A. Palmyra, New York.
  1. Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805 in Sharon, Vermont.
  2. When he was ten years old his parents moved to Palmyra, New York.
  3. Joseph Smith, in his “testimony,” claims that in 1820 there was a great deal of revivalistic preaching being done by area Methodists and Baptists.
    - a) Actually, the revival did not start till 1823.
    - b) Smith was wrong about the date.

4. Joseph Smith claims that one day in 1820, when he was just 15 years old, he was in the woods praying to God.
  - a) Mormons refer to this place in the woods as “the Sacred Grove.”
  - b) “...I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me ... When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other ‘This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!’ My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight...” (Joseph Smith, *The Prophet Joseph Smith’s Testimony*, pp. 4–5).
  - c) “There in that secluded place, in the most dramatic revelation since biblical times, God and his Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the boy and gave him instructions. He was commanded to join none of the existing churches and was told that God would restore to earth the Church originally organized by Jesus Christ, with all of its truths and priesthood authority.” (“History,” [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).
  - d) If Smith had really received such a vision, we would expect that he would have nothing to do with other churches after this.
  - e) And yet, Volume 2 of the “Session Records” for the Western Presbyterian church in Palmyra shows that the Smiths were still active members in 1828—eight years after “First Vision.”
  - f) They were suspended as members of the Presbyterian church in 1830 because they had neglected “public worship and the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.”
  - g) There is also evidence that Smith attempted to join the Methodist church in June 1828, but was dropped by the local circuit rider because of Smith’s low moral character and occupation as a necromancer and dealer of enchantments.
  - h) All of this raises the question, “Did anyone take the story of the first vision seriously?” The answer is no, not even his family.
5. Smith also claimed that on September 21, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to him and disclosed the location of a partially buried box containing golden plates in the “reformed Egyptian tongue” together with two stones used for translating the plates.
  - a) “He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it; as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.” (*The Prophet Joseph Smith’s Testimony*, p. 10).
  - b) Four years later Smith claimed to have removed the plates from Hill Cumorah, and after three years of translating through a curtain, Smith published *The Book of Mormon* in 1830.
  - c) He claimed an angel recovered plates and they no longer exist on earth.

- d) The book claims to contain the religious writings of civilizations in Ancient America between 2200 B.C. and A.D. 421.
  - e) It claims to give an eyewitness account of the ministry of Jesus Christ on the American continent following His resurrection in Jerusalem.
  - f) "Latter-day Saints also consider the Book of Mormon to be a record of great Ancient-American civilizations. According to the record, one of these civilizations stemmed from a man named Lehi who left Jerusalem with his family around 600 B.C. They traveled to the sea, built a boat and continued over sea to the Americas. Following the party's arrival in the New World, growing disharmony caused family groups to fragment into clans that evolved eventually into two opposing nations. Conflicts ensued during the recorded 1,000 years, leading to the eventual demise of one of these nations. Within the context of this story ... stands a series of prophecies and testimonies about Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, including, strikingly, a visit by the risen, resurrected Jesus to the people in the New World... One of the last record-keepers was an ancient American prophet named Mormon who abridged the centuries of records into a concise account on gold plates... This abridged record was passed from Mormon to his son Moroni, the last known survivor of his nation, who, near the end of his life, buried the plates in a hillside located in what centuries later became upstate New York." ("The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ," [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).
6. "State of New York v. Joseph Smith"
- a) Court records prove the Smith was arrested in New York in 1826 for being a con-artist.
  - b) "Warrant issued upon written complaint upon oath of Peter G. Bridgeman, who informed that one Joseph Smith of Bainbridge was a disorderly person and an impostor. Prisoner brought before the Court March 20, 1826. Prisoner examined: says that he came from the town of Palmyra ... that he had a certain stone which he occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were; that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance under ground ... he pretended to tell by looking at this stone where coined money was buried in Pennsylvania, and while at Palmyra he frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was of various kinds..." (Court records of New York).
  - c) While the Mormons claimed this never happened, Jerald and Sandra Tanner published the microfilm copies of the court records in 1971, under the title, *Joseph Smith's 1826 Trial*.
7. There can be no middle ground about Joseph Smith!
- a) Mormons *must* believe that Joseph Smith was the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator—the means through which the "true Gospel" was restored to the earth.
  - b) You can not become a Mormon and doubt the words of Smith!
  - c) "Latter-day Saints revere Joseph Smith as a prophet in the tradition of biblical prophets like Moses and Isaiah. Church members believe that his doctrinal teachings and instructions concerning the Church's organization resulted from divine revelation, not his own learning." ("From Farm Boy to Prophet," [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).

8. On April 6, 1830 the Mormon church was organized—at the time it was called “The Church of Christ.”
    - a) In 1834, thru the influence of Sidney Rigdon, the name was changed to “The Church Of The Latter-day Saints,” dropping out Christ’s name.
    - b) Later, Thomas B. Marsh, one of the original 12 Mormon Apostles, decreed in 1838 that the name should be changed to “The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-day Saints.”
- B. Kirkland, Ohio.
1. Persecution caused Smith and his followers to leave New York and move to Kirkland, Ohio on Lake Erie.
  2. Kirkland served as their headquarters from 1831 to 1837.
  3. In 1836 they finished construction of a large temple.
    - a) They now have 114 temples (not to be confused with church buildings or meetinghouses).
    - b) It has been reported that 98% of the ceremonies performed in Mormon temples are for the dead, and only 2% for the living.
    - c) The temple in Kirkland is now owned by the Reorganized branch.
- C. Independence, Missouri.
1. Independence is approximately 1,000 miles away from Kirkland.
  2. After arriving in Independence, Missouri, Smith dedicated a plot of ground upon which the Mormons believed a great temple would be built (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 84:3–5).
  3. The Mormons were soon driven out of the county by gun point.
  4. The Reorganized branch dedicated their temple in Independence in 1994.
- D. Nauvoo, Illinois.
1. Mormons moved here, 45 miles north of Quincy, Illinois, to build a “Mormon City” which became the largest city in the state.
  2. Nauvoo had a population of around 20,000 people, 5,000 of which were Mormons.
  3. Joseph Smith reached the zenith of his influence here.
    - a) Smith was mayor of the town.
    - b) Church membership rose to 100,000 members nationwide.
    - c) As the mayor, Smith raised his own militia.
    - d) His political power was equaled to that of the state government.
  4. It was here that the Mormon doctrine of “Plural Marriage” (polygamy) caused a great deal of trouble.
    - a) In June, 1844 a newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor* published affidavits of 16 respectable women stating that Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders tried to seduce them into polygamy.
    - b) Smith’s answer was to send a mob, the *Legion of Nauvoo*, to destroy the printing press and compel the publishers to flee for their lives.
    - c) Illinois Governor Ford learned of the act, and ordered Smith to surrender himself to the constable at Carthage for trial.
    - d) Joseph Smith fled, but later returned and was arrested and placed in jail at Carthage, Illinois.
    - e) The governor ordered Smith’s militia to surrender their weapons.
    - f) A riot developed outside the jail and a mob broke into the jail killing Joseph Smith’s brother, Hyrum.
    - g) On that afternoon of June 27, 1844 Joseph Smith was shot and killed as he tried to escape from the jail window.

- h) He was murdered—not by a group of “anti-Mormons,” but by men whose wives and daughters he had tried to ruin!
- i) When the jail was stormed, Joseph Smith used a handgun to kill two men and wound another.
- j) He might have killed more if his gun had not jammed!
- 5. Mormons claim that Smith was a “martyr.”
  - a) The dictionary defines “martyr” as “one who suffers death as a penalty of witnessing to and refusing to renounce his religion.”
  - b) Smith was in jail for breaking the law, and even in jail he tried to defend himself with a six-shooter, and wounded three men.
- 6. Mormons compare Joseph Smith with Jesus Christ:
  - a) I’ve had Mormon elders tell me, “Christ sealed His testimony with His blood at Calvary; Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood at Carthage, Illinois.”
  - b) His birthplace in Vermont has been called the “Bethlehem of Mormonism.”
- 7. During the riot the million dollar temple was destroyed by fire.
- 8. Smith’s death became a battle cry like “Remember the Alamo,” or “Remember the Maine,” or, “Remember Pearl Harbor.”
- E. Salt Lake City, Utah.
  - 1. Two years after the death of Smith, Mormon forces rallied and began a pioneer trek into the far West.
  - 2. “As the senior of the Twelve Apostles, Brigham Young succeeded Joseph Smith as the leader of the Church. In February of 1846, he led the Latter-day Saints across the frozen Mississippi River into unsettled Iowa territory. They struggled across Iowa, eventually establishing a settlement called Winter Quarters near modern-day Omaha, Nebraska... Brigham Young prepared his people—perhaps 17,000 of them by that time—for a historic trek across the vast wilderness to the Rocky Mountains, 1,300 miles to the west. The first pioneer party departed from Winter Quarters early the next spring and arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake on 24 July 1847. During the next few years, thousands of other Latter-day Saints struggled across the American Great Plains to the newly found refuge. Some of the pioneers crossed the plains in wagons. Others were equipped with small, lightweight handcarts. Ten handcart companies crossed the American plains in the next four years. Eight made the journey with relative success, but two endured tragedy and saw hundreds perish of hunger, fatigue and exposure.” (“History,” [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).
  - 3. On April 6, 1860, a group of Mormons formed the “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” at Amboy, Illinois.
    - a) The Reorganized group selected the son of Joseph Smith Junior to be their leader and prophet.
    - b) They reject plural marriage and deny that Joseph Smith ever taught or practiced polygamy, but admit there is a “huge body of circumstantial evidence from sermons” that he did.
    - c) Since 1920 the official corporate headquarters of the church has been at Independence, Missouri.
    - d) This group still believes that the “gathering to Zion,” before Christ’s return, will take place in Missouri, where their headquarters are located at Independence.
    - e) They do not baptize or marry by proxy their ancestors.

- f) They reject the “Eternal Progression” theory of the LDS group.
- g) They do not use the word “Mormon” to refer to their group.
- h) On April 6, 2001, the official name of the “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” was changed to “Community of Christ” ([www.CofChrist.org](http://www.CofChrist.org)).
- i) They have about 250,000 members in 40 countries worldwide.

## II. Mormonism And The Bible

- A. *“The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ* is regarded as divinely inspired scripture, as is the *Holy Bible*. Both volumes are used by Latter-day Saints side by side. Other writings accepted as scripture are the *Doctrine and Covenants*, a compilation of revelations and writings given since the restoration of the Church began, and the *Pearl of Great Price*, a selection from the revelations, translations and writings of Joseph Smith.” (“Core Beliefs and Doctrines,” [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).
- B. “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” (*Articles Of Faith*, #8).
  - 1. In reality they have very little respect for it.
  - 2. They will tell prospects that a great deal of the Bible has been lost and the rest is the object of bad translation.
- C. Orson Pratt, an early Mormon leader, said: “All therefore, is uncertainty as to the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament; they can be proved to be changed, added unto and corrupted in almost every text ... Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original” (*Orson Pratts Works*, pp. 217–218).

## III. The Book Of Mormon

- A. The Book of Mormon claims to tell of Christ’s appearance to American Indians after His resurrection.
  - 1. This appearance of Christ in America was not mentioned by Paul as he recounts our Lord’s post-resurrection appearances (1 Cor. 15:4–8).
  - 2. It was supposedly written in the “reformed Egyptian tongue” and translated with aid of two miraculous stones.
- B. There is something very strange about the Book of Mormon.
  - 1. The Golden Plates, from which the Book of Mormon was supposedly translated, were, according to Mormons, written prior to the 1st century, and yet one-eighteenth of the Book of Mormon is identical, word for word, to the 1611 King James Version of the Bible—1 Corinthians 13 and Isaiah 53 are quoted in full!
  - 2. They even quote words in italics which were supplied by the translators—in the Bible the words in italics are words which are supplied by the translators and are not in the original text.
  - 3. How is it that the Book of Mormon which they claim predates the KJV by 1500 years, could have precisely the same language word for word?
  - 4. Another strange thing: why are there no quotations from the New King James Version, or the American Standard Version, or any other modern English translation?

- C. Nearly 4,000 changes in the book have been made since the 1830 edition.
1. These 4,000 changes represent a staggering embarrassment to the claim of Mormon inspiration.
  2. Do the Mormons claim that God made 4,000 mistakes when helping Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon?
  3. These errors are not merely typographical errors—they are errors in grammar and even some contradictions.
  4. According to Joseph Smith’s testimony there should have not been any reason to make changes in the Book of Mormon.
    - a) He stated that when he and his “witnesses” went out to pray concerning it, a voice spoke to them from heaven telling them the translation of the Book of Mormon was correct.
    - b) “...we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, “These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.”” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 54–55).
    - c) These 4,000 changes were not just grammatical, but changes of names and events, such as Mosiah 21:28, where in the 1830 edition the name of the king was “Benjamin,” but in the modern editions the name is “Mosiah.”
- D. A subtitle was added to the Book of Mormon in 1982: “Another Testament Of Jesus Christ.”
1. We all realize that in law, only the last will is binding.
  2. Once the testator dies, there cannot be another testament (Heb. 9:16).
  3. Offering “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” declares that the blood of Christ is void (cf. Gal. 1:8–9).
- E. Compare the Book of Mormon with the Bible:
1. The Book of Mormon says that Christ was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10); the Bible teaches He was born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1).
  2. The Book of Mormon says there was darkness over the earth for three days (Helaman 14:20, 27); the Bible says it was three hours (Luke 23:44).
  3. The Book of Mormon says the church began in 147 B.C. (footnote at Mosiah 18:17); the Bible teaches it was between 29 and 33 A.D. (Acts 2).
  4. The Book of Mormon says believers were called “Christians” in 73 B.C. (footnote at Alma 46:14); the Bible says it was at Antioch, around 41 A.D. (Acts 11:26).
  5. The Book of Mormon has people acting in the “name of Christ” hundreds of years before He was born (2 Nephi 31:13, 559 B.C.; Jacob 4:6, 540 B.C.); the Bible teaches otherwise (John 16:24; Luke 24:27).
- F. Notice some of the cardinal doctrines of the LDS church which are not found in the Book of Mormon:
1. God has a body of flesh and bones.
  2. God is an exalted man (*D and C*, 130:22).
  3. God is the product of eternal progression.
  4. Men can become gods.
  5. Marriage is for eternity.
  6. New Testament era “Melchizedek priesthood” with offices of Elder, Seventy, and High Priest.
  7. New Testament era “Aaronic Priesthood” with offices of Deacon, Teacher and Priest.

8. A church organization with Stakes and Wards, a First Presidency and President of the church.
  9. Baptism for the dead and a second chance for salvation after death.
  10. All of these doctrines required “additional revelation.”
- G. Where are we after 170 years of examining the Book of Mormon?
1. No city peculiar to the Book of Mormon has ever been located.
  2. No names peculiar to the Book of Mormon has ever been found in New World inscriptions.
  3. No genuine inscriptions have ever been found in Egyptian or anything similar which could correspond to the “reformed Egyptian tongue.”
  4. No ancient copies of the Book of Mormon have ever been found.
  5. No mention of people, nations or places peculiar to the Book of Mormon have ever been found.
  6. In short, there is not one iota of evidence from archaeology which can provide evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon!
  7. This is in marked contrast to the Bible, the accuracy of which has been supported in thousands of ways by archaeological research.

# The Truth About Mormonism (2)

## Introduction

- I. In our last lesson we studied the origin of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, better known to most as “the Mormon church.”
  - A. The church was established by Joseph Smith in 1830.
  - B. Smith had claimed that he received a direct revelation from God telling him not to join any church, but rather he was to restore the ancient church which had fallen into apostasy.
  - C. Smith led his followers from New York to Kirkland, Ohio and then to Independence, Missouri and on to Nauvoo, Illinois.
  - D. While in Nauvoo Smith was killed in a gun-fight by men whose wives and daughters he had tried to destroy.
  - E. Two years later, Smith’s followers moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, under the direction of Brigham Young.
- II. We also examined the claims of the Book of Mormon.
  - A. The Book of Mormon claims to tell of Christ’s appearance to American Indians after His resurrection.
  - B. A subtitle was added to the book in October, 1982, “Another Testament Of Jesus Christ.”
  - C. After 170 years of examining the Book of Mormon:
    1. No city peculiar to the Book of Mormon has ever been located.
    2. No names peculiar to the Book of Mormon has ever been found in New World inscriptions.
    3. No genuine inscriptions have ever been found in Egyptian or anything similar which could correspond to the “reformed Egyptian tongue.”
    4. No ancient copies of the Book of Mormon have ever been found.
    5. No mention of people, nations or places peculiar to the Book of Mormon have ever been found.
    6. In short, there is not one iota of evidence from archaeology which can provide evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon!
- III. In this lesson we want to briefly examine other sources of authority in the LDS church, and take notice of a few of their doctrines.

## Discussion

### I. Other Sources Of Authority

- A. *Doctrine And Covenants*.
  1. Contains 136 “revelations” from God, many of which are not accepted by the Reorganized group—including polygamy, the Temple Lot, etc.
  2. “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it.” (*D and C*, 135:3).
  3. It does contain a divine command to debate: “Wherefore, confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest.” (*D and C*, 71:7; *D and C*, 71:2e, Reorganized version).

- B. *The Pearl Of Great Price*.
1. This book is usually bound together with *Doctrine and Covenants*.
  2. In 1835 Joseph Smith purchased some ancient Egyptian manuscripts.
  3. Smith “translated” one of the manuscripts and published the *Book Of Abraham*, part of Pearl of Great Price which is similar to the Biblical book of Genesis.
  4. In 1967 the manuscripts were really translated by Egyptologists and it turned out to be a book of funeral descriptions called the *Book Of Breathings*.
  5. It does not mention Abraham, his religion nor any Bible characters which Smith claimed for it—Smith was a false prophet.
  6. The Reorganized branch does not recognize *The Pearl of Great Price* as a part of God’s revelation.

## II. Mormon Doctrines

- A. The Stick of Judah and Ephriam (Ezek. 37:15–17).
1. Mormon teachers have the audacity to say that the “stick of Judah” is the Bible and the “stick of Joseph” is the Book of Mormon.
    - a) And thus, the Bible and the Book of Mormon have become “one in God’s hand,” according to Mormon belief.
    - b) It has always been a source of amazement to me that intelligent people can accept this interpretation, and yet Mormons have used this to their advantage in their proselyting work.
    - c) Many who are ignorant of the Scriptures are impressed by their presentation and application of this portion of the Scriptures and have been influenced to join the LDS church.
  2. The central theme of Ezekiel 34–37 is the regathering of the people of Israel back to their own land.
    - a) This section of Scripture is devoted to the hope and restoration of Judah from Babylonian captivity.
    - b) The vision which God gave to the prophet Ezekiel of the Valley of Dry Bones, in chapter 37, represents the nation of Israel.
    - c) The Israelites had been out of their land, had been buried among the Gentile nations, and were, in a sense, devoid of life.
    - d) But God promised that He would bring His nation back to its land once again.
  3. At the time of this prophecy the nation of Israel was saying, “Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off” (Ezek. 37:11).
    - a) But God assured the people He would keep His covenant with Abraham and David—He would fulfill His word to them—“Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel” (Ezek. 37:12).
    - b) In Ezekiel 37:21 we have the explanation given to us again, “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land.”
    - c) The first prophecy of Ezekiel 37 portrays the moral, national and physical resurrection of Israel, while the second prophecy (Ezek. 37:15–28) predicts the future union of the twelve tribes and their restoration to Palestine under one Shepherd.

4. After King Solomon's death the nation of Israel was divided in two kingdoms (1 Kings 11–12).
    - a) Only two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were given to Rehoboam to rule over.
    - b) The other ten tribes were taken from Rehoboam and placed under the leadership of Jeroboam.
    - c) This division persisted, and so, in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were designated as "Judah" and composed of the southern kingdom.
    - d) "Joseph," "Ephraim" and "Israel" were the collective names of the ten tribes who established the northern kingdom.
    - e) When Israel's history is studied, the prophecy under consideration becomes very clear.
    - f) God promises that He is going to unite the two kingdoms and make them one again (cf. Ezek. 37:21–15).
    - g) It is then and there that He will make His covenant of peace with them and be their God.
  5. These "sticks" of Ezekiel 37 are simply the divine edicts of God which He gave to Ezekiel to deliver to the people.
    - a) It is stated in Ezek. 37:20 that these royal decrees were to be in Ezekiel's hand before the eyes of the people.
    - b) This was to show them that all twelve tribes would be united and become "one nation" in God's hand (Ezek. 37:22).
    - c) This prophecy was fulfilled when God allowed His people to return from captivity in 536 B.C.
    - d) Under Zerrubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, the "twelve tribes" which were divided in 931 B.C., some of whom became captives to Assyria in 721 B.C. and the rest to Babylon in 606 B.C., would return to the land of Israel as one nation.
    - e) This is summarized in Ezekiel 37:22, "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again."
  6. This section of Scripture simply pictures the future glory under the reign of the Messiah, Jesus Christ!
- B. Celestial Marriage.
1. "A distinctive Latter-day Saint teaching is that marriage can be for eternity. Such marriages must be performed in a temple by someone who holds the priesthood, which is the authority to act on earth for God. For temple marriages to remain in effect, a husband and wife must love and be faithful to each other and continue Christlike service and commitment throughout their lives." ("Temples Make Forever Families," [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).
  2. Unless they are not physically able, Mormons are required to marry and reproduce.
  3. Good Mormons who possess unquestioned loyalty to the church are permitted the rite of Celestial Marriage executed in the temples.
  4. This "seals" a marriage for eternity—they believe they will be married even after death and produce offspring (cf. Matt. 22:24–32).

- C. Plural Marriage (polygamy).
1. The Reorganized church insists that Joseph Smith never taught or practiced plural marriage (polygamy).
    - a) Documentation now exists to prove otherwise.
    - b) In 1887, LDS Historian Andrew Jensen listed 27 wives of Smith.
    - c) Nauvoo temple records record names of 30 women sealed for eternity to him.
    - d) Other sources show that Smith married 22 of these 30 women.
  2. Mormons claim that Smith received the revelation on polygamy and recorded it on July 12, 1843 at Nauvoo (*D and C*, 132:4, 59, 61–62).
    - a) “Polygamy... was an important part of the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for a half century. The practice began during the lifetime of Joseph Smith but became publicly and widely known during the time of Brigham Young. Today, polygamy is outlawed in the Church—and has been for a century. Any Church members adopting the practice today would be excommunicated—the most severe penalty the Church can impose. But polygamous groups and individuals in and around Utah cause confusion for casual observers and sometimes for visiting media. Church founder Joseph Smith wondered about the ancient, Old Testament practice of plural marriage. His prayerful inquiry on the subject in the 1830s eventually resulted in the divine instruction to reinstitute the practice.” (*“Polygamy: Latter-day Saints and the Practice of Plural Marriage,”* [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)).
    - b) The “Edmunds Bill” of 1882 made polygamy a punishable crime, and many church officials were incarcerated and church property was confiscated, including temples.
    - c) Mormon President John Taylor went into exile and died.
    - d) The Edmunds–Tucker Act dissolved the corporation of the church, which destroyed it as a political and economic institution.
    - e) By 1887 approximately 200 Mormon men were in jail.
    - f) In 1890 Mormon president Wilford Woodruff claims to have received a “special revelation” from God suspending plural marriage.
    - g) Now Mormons have to decide which revelation to obey—Smith or Woodruffs.
  3. Polygamy is still a problem in some isolated areas of the West.
- D. Baptism for the Dead.
1. Mormons do not practice infant baptism, but they do immerse converts, though not in public ceremonies.
  2. However, in temple ceremonies, members may be baptized by proxy for those who died without accepting the teachings of Joseph Smith.
    - a) Such as the heathen, or ancestors who lived while the “church” was in apostasy.
    - b) This is the main reason Mormons spend so much time in genealogical research—they do not want to miss anyone!
    - c) Mormons have a religious obligation to trace their own genealogies and perform temple ordinances for their ancestors.
    - d) The Mormons have the largest genealogical library in the world, the Family History Library in downtown Salt Lake City—they have gathered millions of volumes of birth, marriage and death records.

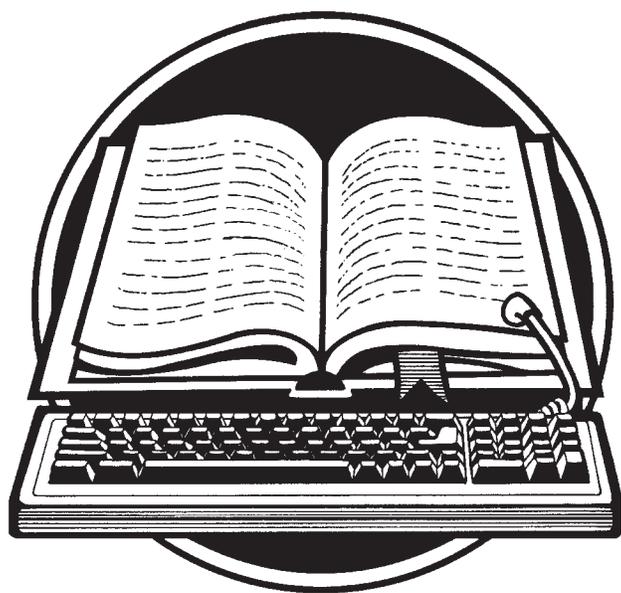
- e) “Millions of people have lived and died without ever learning about the teachings of Jesus Christ and without belonging to his Church. For these people, the Church teaches that ordinances such as baptism and eternal marriage should be performed on earth in behalf of the dead. Latter-day Saints stand as proxies for their own ancestors in these ceremonies, which are held only in sacred temples. They believe these ordinances are valid only if the ordinances are willingly accepted by their deceased ancestors, who even in the next life retain the moral agency to choose. Church members are taught they have a religious obligation to trace their own genealogies and perform temple ordinances for their ancestors. For Latter-day Saints, temples and family history are therefore inextricably connected ... To help trace deceased ancestors, the Church operates the largest genealogical library in the world, the Family History Library in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah. The Church and its members have gathered millions of volumes of birth, marriage, death and other records. Today these microfilmed records are available to the public for research at no cost. The microfilms are available at the library in Salt Lake City, or they can be ordered for use at over 3,400 Family History Centers around the world.” (“Temples Make Forever Families,” *www.lds.org*).
  - f) Departed souls, according to Mormon doctrine, will have another opportunity to hear the gospel preached to them in the spirit world (cf. Heb. 9:27).
  - g) Since they cannot be baptized because they are without bodies, the living may serve the dead by being baptized for them.
3. All of this comes from a misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians 15:29.

### III. What Can We Learn From The Mormons

- A. Statistics could be provided to prove that Mormons are patriotic citizens and industrious workers—this we will not deny.
- B. Mormons are noted for their dedication in personal evangelism.
  - 1. According to research by brother Flavil Yeakley, between 1945 and 1965 the church of our Lord was the fastest growing religious group in America, with a conversion rate of 1 to 12.
  - 2. The Mormons are now in first place, with a conversion rate of 1 to 10.
  - 3. I would find it far easier to take the Bible and convert a man to Christ, than to take the Bible, plus the *Book of Mormon*, plus *Doctrine and Covenants*, plus the *Pearl of Great Price* and convert someone to Joseph Smith!
- C. However, the last words of the Bible tell us: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” (Rev. 22:18–19).

### Conclusion

- I. “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).
  - A. The first Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, was arrested and convicted in New York and was found guilty of being a con-artist, an impostor—he was a necromancer and a charlatan.
  - B. This conviction was four years *before* he published the Book of Mormon!
  - C. Court documents prove he was a convicted criminal.
  - D. My Lord knew no sin—He led a sinless life (1 Pet. 2:21–22, “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.’”).
- II. Joseph Smith said that the moon was inhabited by people six feet tall who dressed like Quakers and lived to be 1,000 years old (Source: *Journal of Oliver B. Huntington*, a devout Mormon contemporary of Joseph Smith; copy at Utah State Historical Society, Vol. 2, p. 166).
  - A. Smith said the “gulf stream” was the result of the city of Enoch’s being taken out from the place where the gulf of Mexico is.
  - B. My Lord always spoke where of He knew—before Abraham was, He was—He was in the beginning with God (John 1:1).
- III. Joseph Smith had the ability to persuade men—but my Lord had the ability to make the mute to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the dead to live.
- IV. My Lord did not die amid blazing guns with a six-shooter in his hands.
  - A. Joseph Smith was murdered—not by a group of “anti-Mormons,” but by men whose wives and daughters he had tried to ruin!
  - B. When the jail was stormed, Joseph Smith used a handgun to kill two men and wound another.
- V. My Lord was never accused of improprieties with women.
  - A. He was never a party to developments that failed.
  - B. He never took His followers money in some promotional scheme that was doomed from the start.
  - C. He never led His followers from one location to another, for His kingdom was not of this world.
- VI. My Lord has given me a simple book, the Bible, which will guide me safely through this world, comfort me in the hour death, and sustain my soul at the judgment—it is this book I must follow.
  - A. As Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).
  - B. “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).



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