

# WHO ARE MORMONS?

## – Their History, Beliefs and Practices

### 1. HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (LDS):

- **1805:** Founder: Joseph Smith Jr. was born
- **1820:** Joseph Smith’s alleged “First Vision” = Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Smith and told him not to join any of the churches for they were “all” wrong.
- **1827:** Smith allegedly received the “Gold Plates” from the Angel Moroni from which the *Book of Mormon* was translated.
- **1830:** *Book of Mormon* was published and the Church was organized with the help of Sidney Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt under the name the “Church of Christ.”
- **1834:** Church name was changed to “Church of the Latter Day Saints.”
- **1838:** Church name changed to its final form, “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”
- **1831-1838:** Church operated from Kirtland, Ohio and built its first temple there.
- **1831-1838:** Mormons settled in Independence (Jackson Country) and Far West (Caldwell County), Missouri. In 1838, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon relocated church headquarters from Kirtland to Far West, but their stay was short-lived as many conflicts with non-Mormon residents led to their expulsion from the state by Governor Boggs’s Extermination Order against them.
- **1839-1844:** Church headquarters operated from Nauvoo, Illinois. Joseph Smith was appointed Mayor of the city until his death in 1844.
- **1843:** Doctrine and Covenants Section 132 was recorded. This revelation authorized the taking of “virgins” in plural marriage. Many believe that in addition to his wife Emma, Joseph Smith married 33 additional wives, one as young as 14 years old.
- **1844:** Joseph Smith taught his famous “King Follett” discourse on the nature of God as an “exalted man.” When the first edition of the *Nauvoo Expositor* paper exposed Joseph Smith’s teachings on the plurality of gods and polygamy, Joseph ordered the destruction of the press and was quickly arrested. As a mob stormed the Carthage jail, Smith died in a gun battle in which he killed two men and injured another.
- **1847:** Mormon Pioneers under the leadership of 2nd LDS Prophet Brigham Young’s leadership arrive in the Salt Lake Valley.

### 2. STATISTICS OF MORMONISM IN 2004:

- 12 million members in 162 countries
- Over 50,000 LDS missionaries
- Over 100 million copies of the Book of Mormon in 93+ languages
- Over 100 temples worldwide.
- 4 Books of “Scripture”
  - *1611 King James Bible* (KJV)
  - *Book of Mormon* (BM)
  - *Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C)
  - *Pearl of Great Price* (PGP)

### 3. SIGNIFICANT CONTRADICTIONS IN LDS SCRIPTURE:

**BIBLE: Nothing would be lost from Scripture**  
(Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24-25; Isaiah 40:8)

**BOOK OF MORMON: Many “plain and most precious” doctrines were lost from the Bible.**  
(1 Nephi 13:26, 28)

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<b>BOOK OF MORMON: God dwells in the heart of the righteous.</b> (Alma 34:36)	<b>DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: God does not dwell in man’s heart.</b> (Section 130:3)
<b>BOOK OF MORMON: God is a “spirit.”</b> (Alma 18:24-28; 22:9-11; 31:15)	<b>DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: God has a body of “flesh and bones.”</b> (Section 130:22)
<b>BOOK OF MORMON: Murder is forgiven.</b> (Alma 24:10)	<b>DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: Murder is unforgivable.</b> (Section 42:79)

#### 4. SIGNIFICANT FALSE PROPHECIES:

- **INDEPENDENCE, MO TEMPLE:** Temple in Independence, Missouri was to be built in Joseph Smith’s “generation” (D&C 57:1-3; D&C 84:3-5). Temple Lot is a vacant lot to this day.
- **ZION ESTABLISHED IN MISSOURI:** Zion was to be established in Independence, Missouri and would not be “moved out of her place” (D&C 57:1-3; 97:19-20; 101:16-20). Mormons were driven out of the area and moved “Zion” to Salt Lake City, Utah.
- **ZION’S CAMP TO REDEEM ZION:** Once driven out of Independence, Joseph Smith was commanded to raise an army of people to “redeem” Zion by physical “power.” The operation completely failed as a plague swept through the army before they reached Independence, MO. (D&C 103; *History of the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 114-116)
- **FAR WEST, MO TEMPLE:** Temple in Far West, Missouri was to be built, beginning in 1838. Mormon were commanded not to cease working on the temple until it was complete. (D&C 115:1, 7-8, 10, 12) They got as far as laying the corner stones (still visible today), but were driven out of the area and the temple was never built.
- **MISSION OF APOSTLE DAVID W. PATTEN:** Patten was to accompany the twelve apostles in performing a mission “over the waters” in the spring of 1839 (D&C 114; 118:4), but Patten died in October 1838 defending Mormon territory in the Mormon Missouri War. Some Mormons try to excuse this false prophecy by claiming that Patten was somehow unworthy, but Joseph Smith proclaimed that Patten died as “a very worthy man” (*History of the Church*, vol. 3, p. 171).

#### 5. UNIQUE LDS PRACTICES:

- Emphasis on obtaining genealogical records so that current LDS members may perform baptism by proxy in LDS temples for dead non-Mormon relatives.
- Marriage for eternity in LDS temples – Non-LDS relatives or friends are not allowed to attend temple wedding ceremonies.
- LDS Sacrament (communion) consists of water and leavened bread, instead of the Biblical pattern of wine and unleavened bread.
- Annual Tithing Settlement meetings where Mormons state whether or not their 10% tithe has been paid to the LDS Church. The tithe is a necessary requirement for entrance into the Mormon temple.
- Word of Wisdom: Mormons abstain from coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco (some drink non-caffeinated tea and soft drinks).
- Members are expected to perform “Church callings” (church service requirements) that are seen as a command from the Lord, given through the local bishop.

#### 6. CONTROVERSIAL BELIEFS:

- **ADAM-GOD DOCTRINE:** Brigham Young proclaimed that Adam conceived Jesus and that Adam “is our Father our God, and the only God with whom we have to do.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 50, 51) This doctrine has officially been denounced by the modern LDS Church.

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- **JESUS HAD MANY WIVES:** LDS Apostles Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt and Jedediah M. Grant claimed that Jesus was a “Polygamist” who married several women. (*The Seer*, p. 172; *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 346; vol. 4, p. 259) The LDS Church of today seeks to distance itself from the polygamist views of early Mormon leaders and thus does not adhere to this view today.
- **THE FATHER PROCREATED JESUS’ HUMAN BODY:** LDS authorities and church manuals have taught that Jesus is the “literal” Son of God whose fleshly body was physically “conceived” and “begotten” by Heavenly Father and Mary in the same way that children are begotten. (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 742; *Family Home Evening*, 1972, pp. 125-126) Although LDS leaders today tend to de-emphasize this belief, it has never been denounced officially by the LDS Church.
- **BLOOD ATONEMENT:** The Prophet Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Joseph Fielding Smith and LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie all claimed that there are “certain sins” which the blood of Christ cannot cover and that one must have his “own blood shed” to atone for those sins. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 134-135, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, pp. 53-54, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 92-93) This doctrine, known as the “blood atonement” doctrine, is not emphasized today, but has never been denounced by the LDS Church.
- **GARDEN OF EDEN IN MISSOURI:** Joseph Smith taught Jackson County is where the Garden of Eden was located and that when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, they moved to Caldwell County and Daviess Country of Far West, Missouri. LDS believe Far West is the location where Cain killed Abel. The “Adam-ondi-Ahman” valley in Daviess County is thought to be the location where Adam will visit prior to the second coming of Christ. While this view is still held by LDS, it has no support with the Biblical text. Since Genesis 2:10-14 mentions the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowing from the Garden of Eden, many speculate that if these rivers are in the same location as they were before the flood, the Garden of Eden was located somewhere in the Middle East, possibly in Iraq.
- **CREATION NOT OUT OF NOTHING:** Mormons believe that God did not create the world “ex nihilo” (out of nothing), but merely organized matter already in existence. This view is not unique to Mormonism, for it grew out of second and third century Greek Gnosticism and Aristotelian and the Platonic views of the world. Early Church Fathers such as Irenaeus and Tertullian argued strongly for the Christian belief that God created the world out of nothing and this has been the historic Christian position for centuries. While the Bible does not specifically state that God created all things “out of nothing,” it is significant that Scripture uses language that leads to this view. At Hebrews 11:3 and Romans 4:17 we see that God created the visible world out of the invisible, and that He “calls into being that which does not exist.”<sup>1</sup>

### 7. Mormon VS Christian Doctrine Comparison Chart

MORMON DOCTRINE	CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
<b>Three Gods: Father, Son, Holy Ghost.</b>	<b>One God in 3 Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.</b> – Matthew 28:19; John 1:1; 20:28, Acts 5:3-4; Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6, 8; 45:21-22; 46:9
<b>The Father (Heavenly Father) is an exalted “Man” who lived on an earth like us and progressed to godhood. He is married to “Heavenly Mother” and together they procreate spirit babies to be born</b>	<b>God the Father is Spirit, not a Man. He is not married. He did not progress to become God, for He has been God from all eternity and does not change.</b> – John 4:24; Hosea 11:9; Numbers 23:19;

<sup>1</sup> *New American Standard Bible*

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into physical human bodies on earth.	Matthew 22:28-30; Psalm 90:2; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17
Jesus is the “spirit brother” of Lucifer and all mankind. He was created by a procreative act between Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother.	Jesus is not our created spirit brother. He is eternal God who created everything including Lucifer and mankind. – Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 7:3; Hebrews 1:8; Colossians 1:15-18
Jesus and Lucifer each offered competing plans of salvation. When Jesus’ plan was chosen over Lucifer’s plan, 1/3 of God’s spirit children followed Lucifer in rebelling.	Lucifer never offered a “salvation plan” because only God is able to be Savior. Lucifer and his demonic angles fell from heaven because he wanted to be exalted “like” God himself. – Isaiah 45:21-22; 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:2-10
Mankind had a pre-mortal, pre-existent life in a spirit world prior to being born into human bodies on earth. Those who fought with Jesus in the battle against Lucifer and the rebellious spirit-brothers were rewarded - those most valiant with white skin.	Mankind first existence is physical, not spiritual. God forms the spirit of man within him, not in some so-called spirit world. Black skin is no less valued than white skin. – 1 Corinthians 15:46; Zechariah 12:1; Acts 17:26; Colossians 3:11
Marriage for eternity in a LDS temple is an essential step toward exaltation as a “god” like Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother with the hope of populating planets like our earth.	Satan fell because he wanted to be “like” God and he offered this lie to Eve in the Garden. People will be unmarried in heaven. - Isaiah 14:12-14; Genesis 3:4-5; Matthew 22:28-30; Luke 20:34-36
Three heavens are three kingdoms where people will live after death: Telestial, Terrestrial, Celestial.	The three heavens in Scripture refer to: 1) Sky where birds fly. - Genesis 1:7-8, 20 2) Stars and Planets. - Psalm 19:1-6 3) Paradise where God resides. - 2 Corinthians 12:2-4
All except the sons of perdition (apostates) will inherit salvation in one of three kingdoms of heaven. Hell is only temporary punishment for the wicked.	Only those who trust Christ will inherit heaven. The rest who reject Jesus as God’s only means of salvation will inherit eternal hell. – Matthew 7:13-14; 25:46; John 3:36; 14:6
Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood authority is required to receive saving ordinances necessary to enter the highest heaven. This “authority” is found only in the LDS Church.	The Aaronic Priesthood authority has been replaced by the Melchizedek Priesthood authority held only by Jesus Christ. Ultimate salvation is in Christ, not a church. – Hebrews 7:1-4, 11-17; 23-28; Acts 4:12
Baptism is essential for salvation in the highest heaven.	Baptism is a physical sign of the spiritual baptism of trusting Christ. It is not an essential step to receive the gospel and salvation. – 1 Corinthians 1:14, 17; Acts 10:44-47; Romans 6:3-4; 11:6
Those who died without hearing the LDS gospel are given a 2 <sup>nd</sup> chance to receive it in “Paradise” and have “baptism for the dead” performed by LDS relatives so they can progress in eternity.	There is no 2 <sup>nd</sup> chance for those who did not receive Christ as judgment follows immediately after death. – Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:22-24 Paradise is the “third heaven” where God dwells, not a “spirit prison.” – 2 Corinthians 12:2-4; Luke 23:43 Paul and the Corinthian believers did not practice “baptism for the dead.” – 1 Corinthians 15:29