

## World Religions Study

Mormonism: A “New” Prophet  
Writes “New” Scripture.

## Introduction

- Officially called, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. They do not refer to themselves at the Mormon church.
- Currently there are 13 million members worldwide and is becoming one of the fastest growing religions world-wide adding 1 million members every three years.

## Background

- Founded by Joseph Smith in 1820 ten years before starting first church.
- Received a vision at the age of 14 when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him near his home in Palmyra, NY.
- Smith wanted to know what church to join, but was warned by the Father and Jesus to join none due to apostasy.

## Background

- In 1823, Smith received a vision from the Angel Maroni to unearth sacred golden plates that held a new revelation of God.
- Smith, allegedly, dug up the plates near his home and translated the plates which were written in “Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics”.
- Smith learned that Maroni had been a prophet of God living in North America.

## Background

- Smith learned that in 600 BC a Jewish man, Lehi, fled from Jerusalem in a ship and landed in Central America.
- These Jewish people multiplied and became two great nations:
  - Nephites
  - Lamanites

## Background

- After years of warfare, the Lamanites (ancestors of Native Americans) exterminated the Nephites. The last living Nephite was the prophet Moroni (Same as angel).
- Before Moroni died he buried the sacred golden plates in Upstate NY.
- In 1830, Smith translated the golden plates into the book of Mormon.

## Background

- Smith left NY with 1200 followers and settled in Kirtland Ohio, where the first temple was built in 1836.
- Left Ohio and settled in Independence Missouri, but were persecuted and forced to leave.
- Settled across state line in Commerce, Illinois.

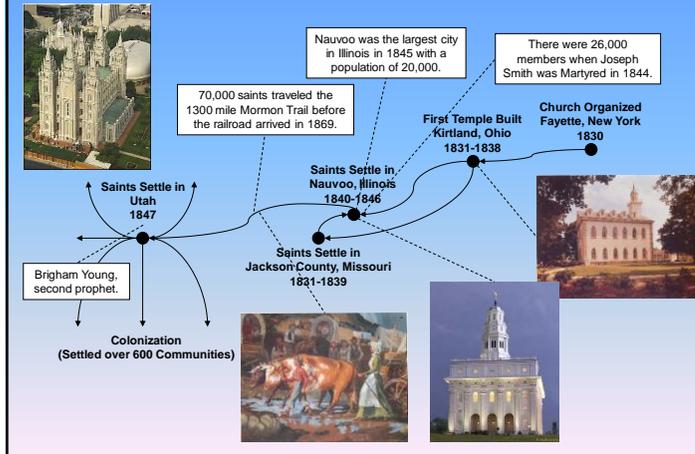
## Background

- Upon settling in Commerce, Smith changed name of town to Nauvoo and built a second temple.
- In 1843, Smith received further revelation that allowed for plural marriages.
- In 1844, the newspaper in Nauvoo released article criticizing Smith.
- Smith ordered his followers to destroy the press.

## Background

- Being arrested for this act, Smith was taken to prison and there an angry mob rushed the jail and murdered the Mormon leaders.
- Smith is considered a martyr of the Mormon faith.
- After his death, Brigham Young rose to lead the group to their present location in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## History: Mormon History Timeline



## Sacred Writings

- The Book of Mormon – the sacred revelation of God, including Jesus coming to North America to preach to the descendants of Nephi in 34 AD.
  - Taught about baptism, communion, and preached the whole Sermon on the Mount.
- Smith also “revised” the King James Bible including new revelations.

## Sacred Writings

- Smith also wrote two books considered sacred to the Mormons:
  - Doctrines & Covenants – Include teaching on practice and governance of church and members.
  - Pearl of Great Price - The Pearl of Great Price contains five sections: "Selections from the Book of Moses", "The Book of Abraham", "Joseph Smith—Matthew", "Joseph Smith—History" and "The Articles of Faith".

## Scholarly Criticism

- References to horses in North America before 400 AD found in the Book of Mormon.
- Recent DNA studies have shown that Native Americans are of northeast Asian descent, not Jewish.

## Scholarly Criticism

- After translated the sacred golden plates, they were destroyed to protect the integrity of the translation.
- Witnesses who signed their name to the Book of Mormon (Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer) later left the Mormon church and denied ever seeing the actual plates.

## Scholarly Criticism

- Nobody could translate ancient Egyptian language until 1967. But when the Rosetta Stone was found it made it possible.
- An original papyrus scroll that Smith purchased was translated into the Book of Abraham. The original scroll was kept in a Museum in New York City.
- When compared to the Rosetta Stone not one word was translated correctly.

**Joseph Smith boasted that he did more than Jesus to keep a church together.** "God is in the still small voice. In all these affidavits, indictments, it is all of the devil--all corruption. Come on! ye prosecutors! ye false swearers! All hell, boil over! Ye burning mountains, roll down your lava! for I will come out on the top at last. I have more to boast of than ever any man had.

"...I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day Saints never ran away from me yet . . ." (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 408-409).

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- Believe in many gods (polytheism) rather than One God (monotheism).
- God the Father was once a man like us and married the Heavenly Mother.
- Their union produced "spirit children", who live with them in "pre-existence" near a huge star called Kolob.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- All humans are children of these heavenly parents before being born to earthly parents.
- Two of God's sons desired to be savior of earth:
  - Jesus and his spirit-brother,
  - Lucifer.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- The Father chose the plan of Jesus over Lucifer and so Lucifer rebelled taking 1/3 of spirit children with him.
- Lucifer became Satan and the 1/3 became demons.
- The remaining 2/3's who were loyal to the Heavenly Father were blessed to be born to human families on earth.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- Teach a salvation of Eternal Progression.
  - The purpose of human life is to progress to full salvation.
- To achieve this state, called Celestial Exaltation, humans must be obedient by repenting of sins, and receive proper baptism through the priesthood of the Mormon church.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- After receiving baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of Hands. Only after this can a Mormon enter a temple.
- Local Mormon churches are open to all, but the temples are only for Mormons who have eternally progressed.
- They must abstain from coffee, tea, and tobacco products.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

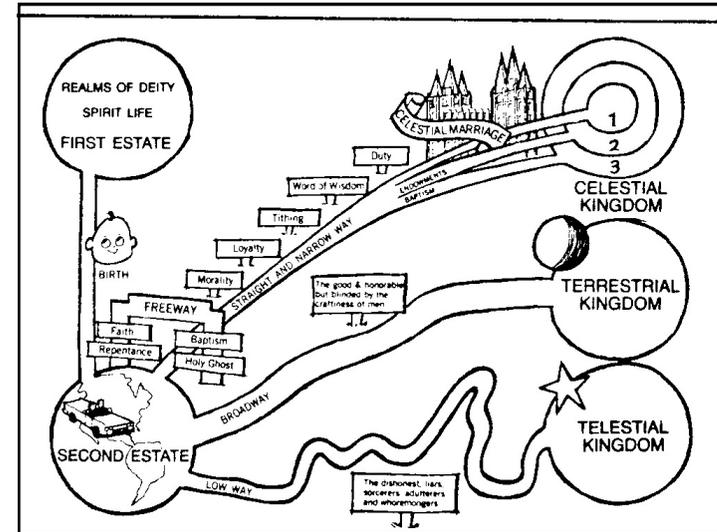
- There are 120 Mormon temples in the world. Marriage can only be performed in these temples.
- Marriages that happen are considered celestial marriages that last forever and will result with the couple being in heaven producing their own spirit children much like the Heavenly Father and Mother.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- Believe in a second chance salvation.
- After death Mormons can baptize the dead and perform celestial marriages for the dead by proxy as they stand in their place.
- Mormons are huge on ancestry and genealogies, so to find all family is important so they can be baptized and married forever.

## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- Do not believe in the Sin of Adam, only personal sin.
- Jesus pardoned all men from sin.
- According to Mormon teaching, everyone will be saved except those who willfully walk away from Mormon teaching.
- They teach that there are three levels of heaven for all people.



## Doctrine of the Mormon Church

- Brigham Young taught that Jesus married, Mary and Martha, and Mary Magdalene, and that the Wedding in Cana was His own wedding.
- One Mormon Prophet, Lorenzo Snow, said: "As man is, God once was, as God is, Man may become."
- Believe in an open canon.

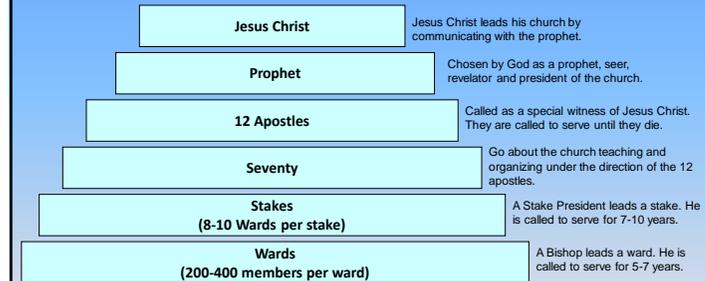
## Practices

- **Lay Clergy** – The clergy at the Mormon church is not paid. Normal members serve as bishop for 5-7 years.
- **Sermon** – The sermon each Sunday is given by different members each week.
- **Fast Sunday** – The first Sunday of each month Mormons fast 24 hours (two meals) and donate the money saved to poor.
- **Sabbath Day** – Mormons keep the Sabbath day holy by refraining from shopping, work and leisure activities.

## Practices

- **Home Teaching** – Pairs of men are assigned to teach and watch over 2-5 families.
- **Visiting Teaching** – Pairs of women are assigned to teach and watch over 2-5 women.
- **Mutual** – The youth meet every Wednesday evening to work on Scouting for the young men and a similar program for the young women.

## Organization



## Preparedness

- **Food Storage** – Mormons are taught be prepared by keeping a year's supply of food and money.
- **72 Hour Kits** – Mormons are taught to have a kit containing food and other preparedness items to take with in times of an emergency.
- **Gardens** – Mormons are encouraged to grow a vegetable garden.

## What Does the Bible Say

- More than one God?
  - *“You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.” (Isaiah 43:10, NASB95)*

## What Does the Bible Say

- Marriage Forever?
  - *“For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”* (Matthew 22:30, NASB95)
- New Revelation?
  - *“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!”* (Galatians 1:8, NASB95)

## What Does the Bible Say

- God was once a Man?
  - *“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* (John 4:24, NASB95)
- Better Heaven for good works?
  - *“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.”* (Ephesians 2:8–9, NASB95)