

# World Religions and False Cults

## Part 6 - Mormons

### The History of Mormons

In 1820, Joseph Smith (age 14) supposedly received a vision while in the woods of upstate New York in which God told him that all churches were wrong and that he was to start the “only true church.” At age 17, he was directed by an angel (named Moroni) to a set of buried golden plates that contained the history of ancient America and the “fullness of the everlasting gospel.” The words were written in Egyptian-like hieroglyphics, so he was given transparent stones through which he could read the plates. After his teaching was rejected in New York, Smith moved with a few followers to Ohio, Missouri, and then Illinois. Controversy followed him, and he was killed by a mob of men who stormed a jail in which he was being held. A new leader, Brigham Young, led a group out west (now Salt Lake City, Utah) to get out of the country. With a strong missionary effort, the church (referred to as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) has grown to 14 million followers (6 million in the US).

### Core Beliefs of Mormons

Traditional Christian teaching is rejected as apostasy. The Bible is used, but The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price is their ultimate authority. Though considered “perfect,” the Book of Mormon has undergone over 2,000 corrections. Plus, no evidence exists for the plates it came from, nor the great civilizations it refers to. Key views:

- God: He is a man with a body like ours. Jesus is just like us other than being the first born spirit son and having a unique birth. The trinity is viewed as three separate Gods.
- Mankind: We are all the literal offspring of the Heavenly Father and Mother. We can become gods our self one day: “As man is, God once was; as god is, man may become.”
- Salvation: Jesus provided immortality for all people, though only devout Mormons can reach the highest of the three eternal kingdoms and become gods themselves.

### Keys for Evangelism

- Mormons often use feelings (“burning in their bosom”) to validate their faith. Point them to solid truth as the answer.
- Mormons redefine biblical terms, so read verses in context. Explain the truth of the gospel carefully and clearly.