

Denominationalism, Religious Cults and World Religions

Lesson 11

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon)

Introduction:

The Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) traces its beginning to April 6, 1830, in Palmyra, New York. Its founder, Joseph Smith, was born in Vermont in 1805, but his family soon moved to the area of western New York that had been repeatedly swept by religious revivals in what was commonly called the Second Great Awakening. The Smiths believed in visions and prophecies, and participated in religious practices advocating such.

At the age of fourteen, Joseph Smith claimed two angels appeared to him and urged him not to join any of the existing churches, since they were false and the corrupt offspring of the Great Apostate Church – the Roman Catholic Church. During this time, Joseph Smith also began gaining a reputation as a treasure hunter, and was actually tried in court and found guilty (*State of New York v. Joseph Smith*) of being a "disorderly person and an imposter who claimed to find buried treasure by looking into stones."¹

However, at the age of twenty-four, Smith claimed he received a number of visions from God. In one vision Smith claimed he was told of a buried book made of golden plates. Allegedly inscribed on these plates was the history of an ancient American civilization that were the descendants of the so-called "ten lost tribes of Israel."² Smith said an angel by the name of Moroni directed him to the stone box which contained the golden plates, as well as "seer stones" (he called the "urim and thumim") which were used to translate the text. He translated the text of the *Book of Mormon* while sitting at a table with a curtain separating him from his close associate and friend, Oliver Cowdery. Smith said he was able to translate the *Book of Mormon* by putting a seer stone in his hat, holding it up to his face, and the translation would magically appeared on the stone. Cowdery simply copied down the translation as Smith read it aloud. The *Book of Mormon* was completed and went on sale in 1830 as "another revelation of Jesus Christ." Soon after, Smith and his followers organized the Church of Jesus Christ. The members were called "Latter Day

¹ Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?*, 1972, Modern Microfilm Co., Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 33

² Critics claim that the *Book of Mormon* was plagiarized in part from an unpublished manuscript written by Solomon Spalding as a fictional account of the "ten lost tribes of Israel" migrating to North American and intermarrying with American Indians. This claim first appeared in print in the book *Mormonism Unveiled*, published in 1834 by E.D. Howe. The theory claimed that the Spalding manuscript was at some point acquired by Sidney Rigdon, who used it in collusion with Joseph Smith, Jr. to produce the *Book of Mormon*. Although Mormons claim Rigdon joined the Latter Day Saints movement after reading the Book of Mormon, critics claim that the story was a later invention to cover the book's allegedly true origins.

Saints" or "Mormons" and the church eventually became known as "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

Over the next fourteen years Smith attracted thousands of followers by sending out missionaries, and publishing numerous so-called revelations. To raise money to increase the circulation of the *Book of Mormon*, Joseph Smith told his two closest supporters, David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, that God had directed him to send the two men to Toronto, Canada, to sell the copyright to the *Book of Mormon*. When they were unable to sell the copyright, the two men questioned Smith about his so-called revelation. Smith replied: "Some revelations are of God; some revelations are of men; and some revelations are of the devil."³

One of Smith's wildest revelations concerned the moon. He claimed the moon was populated with people who were six feet tall, dressed like Quakers, and lived to be a thousand years old.⁴ Smith also prophesied that the Lord would return at His second coming in 1835. When that did not take place, Smith changed the date to 1843. When the Lord did not return on that occasion either, he once again changed the date, this time to 1891.⁵

In 1831, Smith moved west to Ohio with plans to build a communal city called "American Zion." Smith and his followers gathered in Kirtland, Ohio, and established an outpost in Independence, Missouri, which he intended to be Zion's "center place." During the 1830s, Smith supervised construction of an expensive temple, and claimed that John the Baptist had personally appeared to him and Oliver Cowdery conferring upon them the "Aaronic priesthood." Later Smith and Cowdery claimed that Peter, James, and John had also appeared to them and conferred upon them the "priesthood of Melchizedek" and gave them the "keys of apostleship." However, due to the collapse of a church-sponsored bank and violent skirmishes with angry non-Mormon Missourians, Smith's dreams of building "Zion" in Missouri and Ohio failed by the end of the decade.

In the early 1840s, Smith established a new city called Nauvoo, Illinois, where he served as mayor and militia commander. However, in 1844, Smith and the Nauvoo City Council angered non-Mormons by destroying a printing press after it was used to publish an exposé critical of Smith's power and practice of polygamy. Although Smith repeatedly denied all allegations of polygamy by himself and his followers, he was arrested and imprisoned in Carthage, Illinois. One of Smith's final prophecies was the bold claim that, ". . . neither the rage of devils nor the malice of men shall ever cause him to fall by the hand of his enemies until he has seen Christ in the flesh at his final coming. . ."⁶ An angry mob that was outraged by Smith and his practices stormed the jailhouse on June 27, 1844 and murdered Smith at the age of 38. Years later, in 1852, Mormons finally admitted they had been practicing polygamy all along. Noted biographer, Fawn Brodie,

³ David Whitmer, *Address to All Believers in Christ*, 1887, Richmond, MO, p. 131.

⁴ Oliver B. Huntington, a follower of Joseph Smith, provides this information in Vol. 11, p. 166 of his *Journal*.

⁵ *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 182.

⁶ Oliver Cowdery, *Defense in a Rehearsal of My Grounds for Separating Myself from the Latter Day Saints*, 1839, Pressley's Job Office, Norton, OH, p. 1.

the niece of the late Mormon President David O. McKay, wrote that Joseph Smith actually had 49 wives ranging in ages from 15 to 59.⁷

Following Smith's death a struggle for control of the Mormon Church ensued with Joseph Smith, Jr. being elected president of the Reorganized Church which remained in Independence, Missouri and established their headquarters there. However, the main body of Mormons, led by Brigham Young, moved west to Utah to escape further persecution. Eventually they settled by the "Great Salt Lake" and built Salt Lake City, where the Mormon temple was erected and stands to this day as the headquarters of the Mormon Church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Utah), and the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints (Missouri) have no fellowship with one another because each claims to be the one true church.

I. Some Truths They Have Advocated:

A. Mormons teach the following truths:

1. They teach that individuals are responsible for their own sins, and that we do not inherit the sin of Adam.
2. They teach that baptism is for the remission of sins, and that Biblical baptism must be by immersion only.
3. They believe the Lord's Supper must be observed every first day of the week (every Sunday), although they have changed one of the elements of the Lord's Supper. They use water rather than fruit of the vine.
4. They emphasize the responsibility of every member of the church being a "missionary" of sorts in taking their beliefs into the world.

II. Mormon Doctrine vs. Bible Doctrine:

A. The nature of God (The "Adam-God Doctrine" and present-day Mormon teaching).

1. The so-called "Adam-God" doctrine (or Adam-God theory) was one of several Mormon theological doctrines taught by Brigham Young in the mid-1800's.

⁷ Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 1960, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, pp. 334-336. (Because of her relationship to President McKay, and because Brodie was a noted historian, she was allowed unrestricted access to Mormon archives in gathering material for her biography on Joseph Smith. However, after the book *No Man Knows My History* was published, Mormon officials realized it was actually an expose' of Smith. Brodie was promptly excommunicated from the Mormon Church and her book was banned.)

- a. According to Brigham Young, he was taught by Joseph Smith⁸ that: Adam is "our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do".⁹
 - (1). According to the doctrine, Adam was once a mortal man who became exalted while living on another planet, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him to the earth, where they became mortal by eating the fruit of the Garden of Eden.
 - (2). After bearing mortal children and establishing the human race, they returned to their heavenly thrones where Adam serves as the god of this world.
 - (3). Later, Adam returned to the earth to become the literal father of Jesus.
 - b. Soon after Brigham Young's death in 1877, the Adam-God doctrine was denounced within mainstream Mormonism, and was replaced by the present-day theology that God and man are essentially the same.
2. Present-day Mormon theology teaches that God the Father has a body of flesh and bones.
- a. "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man is. . . ." (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:22).
 - b. The doctrine also teaches that God is not uniquely self-existent, transcendent, or eternal, nor is He truly the creator of all things, for He is one among potentially billions of Gods, and does not even have the ability to create matter.
 - (1). As BYU professor David Paulson once put it, "God does not have absolute power... but rather the power to maximally utilize natural laws to bring about His purposes."

⁸ Minutes of Meeting, at Historian's Office; Great Salt Lake City; 7 P.M. April 4, 1860 "It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God &c When in Luke Johnson's"

⁹ Young (1852, p. 50) (statement given in the General Conference of the LDS Church on April 9, 1852).

- c. The traditional Mormon view of God is summed up by the famous Lorenzo Snow couplet, "As man is God once was, as God is man may be."
 - (1). The historic understanding of this strongly implies that God the Father was once a sinner, and that we ourselves may model our mortal experience unto godhood after the mortal experience he once participated in.
 - d. Mormons teach that all are potentially gods. ("In his mortal condition man is a God in embryo." (James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 530.)
 - e. They teach that Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others have become gods. (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:19,20).
 - f. In his famous "King Follett Discourse" Joseph Smith taught, "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. That is the great secret... [Y]ou have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you..."
 - g. In a later sermon Joseph Smith boldly preached: "If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? And everything comes in this way. Paul says that which is earthly is in the likeness of that which is heavenly, Hence if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that He had a Father also? I despise the idea of being scared to death at such a doctrine, for the Bible is full of it."
3. The teachings of the Bible are completely contrary to the Mormon teaching concerning the nature and character of God.
- a. The Bible does not teach that God is flesh and bones as we are, but teaches that "God is a Spirit" (Jno 4:24; cf. Luke 24:39b).

- (1). All references to the "hand of God," etc. are anthropomorphic expressions (figures of speech)
 - b. There was no god before God, and He is from everlasting to everlasting – He has always been and will always be (Isa 43:10; Psa 90:2; 1 Tim 2:5; Eph 4:6; Jas 2:19).
 - c. The Bible teaches there are three distinct Divine persons who comprise the "one God" ("godhead").
 - (1). The Father is called God (1 Cor 8:6, etc.).
 - (2). The Son is called God (Jno 1:1-3; Heb 1:8).
 - (3). The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4).
 - d. However, the Mormon position on the nature of God amounts to polytheism – the existence of many gods.
 - e. If Mormons are wrong on the nature of God, their faith has no foundation (Heb 11:6).
- B. Jesus and His followers supported polygamy.
1. Jesus was supposedly crucified because of polygamy.
 - a. "A belief in the doctrine of a plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus and His followers."¹⁰
 - b. The Bible says Jesus taught the concept of one man for one woman, for a lifetime (Matt 19:4-6).
- C. Living apostles today in the church ("Council of Twelve Apostles"):
1. Mormons claim the church today is built on the literal, living "foundation of apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20), and that the true church must have living apostles and prophets today.
 2. However, the Bible teaches that the church is built on the foundation which was "laid" by the apostles – namely, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:10-11).
 - a. Apostles and prophets are not the foundation upon which the church is built – that foundation is the teachings of the apostles and prophets concerning Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ LDS President Jedediah M. Grant, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:345-346.

- b. Furthermore, the person of Jesus Christ "Himself" is the "chief cornerstone" of that foundation.
 - c. Since, ". . .no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 3:11), then any church which is built on the foundation of mere men is not the Lord's church.
 - 3. Furthermore, to be an apostle one must have been a witness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:22).
 - a. This is why the Lord appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-15).
- D. Miraculous gifts and revelations continue today.
 - 1. The Bible teaches that miraculous gifts and revelations ceased with the completion of the New Testament (1 Cor 13:8-13; Jas 1:25; Jude 3).
 - 2. Mormonism originally taught racism, forbidding blacks to be admitted into the Mormon priesthood because they allegedly bear the "mark of Cain" (black skin).¹¹ However, a new "revelation" (June 8, 1978) was received that now admits "all worthy male members of the Church" into the Mormon priesthood.
 - a. "In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously."¹²

¹¹ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, p. 290.

¹² Official Declaration 2: <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/2?lang=eng>

- E. There are three stages or degrees of Heaven.
 - 1. Joseph Smith described life after death based primarily upon a vision he claimed to have received together with Sidney Rigdon, February 16, 1832, and recorded it in *Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76*.
 - a. According to Smith, life after death consists of three degrees or kingdoms of glory, called the Celestial Kingdom, the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Telestial Kingdom.
 - b. The Mormons misuse Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:40 concerning "celestial bodies" and "terrestrial bodies". However, Paul is not discussing three "degrees" or "kingdoms," but rather the glory of the heavenly body we will have in the resurrection compared to the earthly body we now have.
- F. Hell is only for the few "truly wicked", not the many, and that after the final judgment the majority of the wicked will receive some degree of glory.
 - 1. "Mormons believe in hell, but our conception of hell is different than the one that generally springs to mind, and we use the word to mean different things in different contexts. For us, there are two 'hells', really. One is a state of pain, guilt, and anguish where the spirits of the wicked will be after they die but before the final judgment (we often call this state *spirit prison*). The other is an everlasting state of hell reserved for a few truly wicked (we commonly refer to this one as *outer darkness*). Because the second state only applies to few, for the majority of people *hell* will not last forever: after the final judgment most people will receive some degree of glory."
 - 2. However, Jesus taught that "few" will enter heaven, and "many" will enter hell (Matt 7:13-14).
 - 3. Jesus also taught that hell is "everlasting" (Matt 18:8; 25:41).
- G. Mormons have other "inspired, authoritative" books in addition to the Bible (the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine & Covenants*, *Pearl of Great Price*, etc.).

1. However, the Bible teaches that it:
 - a. Is complete (2 Tim 3:16-17; Jude 3), and provides us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3).
 - b. Must not be added to (Rev 22:18-19) – even if the message which differs from the gospel is delivered by an angel (Gal 1:6-9).

III. Problems with the Book of Mormon:

- A. There are numerous problems with the Book of Mormon that clearly show the writing did not originate from God, but is merely the product of man's invention.
 1. The Book of Mormon admits it is the produce of man, and not of God.
 - a. The authorship of the Book of Mormon is clearly seen in the "original" (1830) title page, which tells us Joseph Smith, Jr. is the "Author and Proprietor" (owner). (See: *Book of Mormon, 1830 Title Page*)
 2. The Book of Mormon is scientifically inaccurate (See: *Scientific Inaccuracy of the Book of Mormon* and *Smithsonian Institute Letter*).
 3. The Book of Mormon defies common literary and grammatical rules. As originally written, it contained numerous grammatical and spelling mistakes (See: *Grammatical Errors in the Book of Mormon*).
 4. The Book of Mormon defies common sense.
 - a. When the immigrants allegedly prepared to come to the new world, God supposedly told them to make eight airtight square vessels. When Jared complained that they were dying from a lack of oxygen, God told him to cut a hole in the top and bottom of every ship and then to plug the holes. If the boats capsized during a storm, the people would plug up the top hole (now on the bottom) and unplug the bottom hole (now on top) (Ether 2:17-22).
 - b. The most energetic decapitated man that ever lived is found in the Book of Mormon:

- (1). "And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, that he rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz. And it came to pass that after he had smitten off the head of Shiz, that Shiz raised up on his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died." (Ether 15:30-31)
- c. In Jacob 7:27, Joseph Smith used the French word *adieu*.
According to the dates given by Mormons, The Book of Jacob was written between 544 and 421 BC. The French language did not exist until around AD 700, which makes the usage of this word doubly ridiculous, and proves that the Book of Mormon is not from God.
 - (1). "And I, Jacob, saw that I must soon go down to my grave; wherefore, I said unto my son Enos: Take these plates. And I told him the things which my brother Nephi had commanded me, and he promised obedience unto the commands. And I make an end of my writing upon these plates, which writing has been small; and to the reader I bid farewell, hoping that many of my brethren may read my words. Brethren, adieu." (Jacob 7:27)
- d. Baldness is supposed to be caused by sin.
 - (1). "And it shall come to pass, instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; burning instead of beauty." (2 Nephi 13:24).
5. The Book of Mormon plagiarizes God's Word. Much of the KJV of the Bible is reproduced in the Book of Mormon (over 25,000 words, in fact). Two important questions arise from this:
 - a. Why would God reveal His Word in America in 1830 in the language of 1611 England?
 - b. If the Bible has been perverted through translation (as Mormon's

claim), why is so much of the Book of Mormon a verbatim reproduction of the King James Version of the Bible?

- B. The Book of Mormon and other Mormon writings contradict themselves.
1. Concerning the plurality of God:
 - a. There is "one God." (Alma 11:27-39, 44; 2 Nephi 31:21; Mormon 7:7; 3 Nephi 11:27).
 - b. There are many gods (D&C 121:32; 132:18-20, 37).
 2. Concerning the nature of God:
 - a. God is a Spirit (Alma 18:26-28; 22:8-11).
 - b. God has a body (D&C 130:22).
 3. Concerning the truthfulness of God.
 - a. God cannot lie (Ether 3:12; 2 Nephi 9:34)
 - b. God commands lying (Pearl of Great Price: Book of Abraham 2:22-25).
 4. Concerning the immutability of God's Word.
 - a. God's Word is unchangeable (Alma 41:8).
 - b. God's Word can change (D&C 56:4-5).
 5. Concerning the fate of man after death.
 - a. Death seals man's fate (Mosiah 2:36-39; Alma 34:32-35).
 - b. Man can be saved even after death (D&C 76:106-112; 88:99)
 6. Concerning Baptism.
 - a. Unbelievers (heathens) can be saved without baptism (Moroni 8:22-23; 2 Nephi 9:25-26; Mosiah 15:24-27).
 - b. Baptism can be carried on behalf of those who have died unsaved (D&C 128:5, 17-18) Note: If the heathen can be saved without baptism, then why do Mormon's practice baptism for the dead?
 7. Concerning heaven and hell.
 - a. The destiny of all is either heaven or hell (2 Nephi 28:22; 1 Nephi 15:35; – although most will be saved Mosiah 16:11, 27:31; Alma 41:4-8; 42:16).

- b. There are three degrees of glory or kingdoms in heaven (D&C 76:43, 70-112).
 - 8. Concerning murder.
 - a. Murder can be forgiven (3 Nephi 30:2).
 - b. Murder cannot be forgiven (D&C 42:18).
 - 9. Concerning polygamy.
 - a. Polygamy condemned (Jacob 1:15; 2:24; 3:5; Mosiah 11:2; 2 Nephi 26:31; Mosiah 27:5).
 - b. Polygamy commanded (D&C 132:1, 37-39, 61; 42:71-73; 43:12-13; 51:13-14).
- C. The Book of Mormon (and other so-called "inspired" Mormon writings) contradicts the Bible.
 - 1. The birthplace of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Jesus was born in Jerusalem (Alma 7:10).
 - b. Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7).
 - 2. The name "Christians".
 - a. Believers were called Christians long before the birth of Christ (Alma 46:13-16).
 - b. "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch (Acts 11:26b).
 - 3. The appearance of Christ.
 - a. Christ appeared on earth to minister to people after His ascension (3 Nephi 10:18-19).
 - b. Jesus will remain in Heaven until His second coming at the end of the world (Acts 3:20,21; Heb 10:12,13).
 - 4. The establishment of the church.
 - a. The church began in approximately 147 BC (Mosiah 18:17)
 - b. The church was established on the first Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt 16:18; Acts 2).
 - 5. The darkness at the crucifixion of Jesus.
 - a. There were 3 days of darkness (Helaman 14:20-27).
 - b. There were 3 hours of darkness (Luke 23:44).

6. Baptism
 - a. People were added to the church by baptism centuries before the church was established (Mosiah 25:18).
 - b. People were first added by the Lord to the church by baptism on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38, 47).
7. The sufficiency of the Bible.
 - a. The Bible is not all-sufficient (2 Nephi 29:1-4).
 - b. The Bible is all-sufficient (2 Pet 1:3; 2 Tim 3:16-17).
8. Ignorance of the Bible
 - a. Ignorance of the Bible is excusable (Mosiah 3:11).
 - b. Ignorance of the Bible is not excusable (Acts 17:30-31).
9. Melchizedec
 - a. Mormon men can attain to the Melchizedec priesthood (D&C 84:20).
 - b. Jesus Christ is the Christian's high priest, and the only one who is a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedec" (Psa 110:4; Heb 5:5-10)
10. Bishops, Elders and Deacons
 - a. There is a distinction between Bishops and Elders (Bishops are older married men), Elders (most of whom are Missionaries) may be unmarried young men over the age of 19, whereas Deacons may be appointed at the age of 12 and up.
 - b. Bishops, Elders and Pastors are all the same (the terms are used interchangeably), and must be married men with believing children (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), whereas Deacons must also be married men, but are not required to have believing children (1 Tim 3:8-13).
11. Marriage
 - a. Marriage can be eternal – for "time and eternity" – if performed in the Mormon Temple (*Mormon Doctrine* pg. 118-119; *Doctrines of Salvation* 2:74)

- b. Marriage is in this life only, and only until death (Matt 22:29-30; Rom. 7:1-3).
12. Baptism for the dead.
- a. Baptism can be performed by proxy on behalf of those who have died without being baptized or who had been baptized without the proper authority behind it (3 Nephi 25:5–6; D&C 124:93; D&C 128:17–18).
 - (1). They base this doctrine on a misinterpretation of 1 Cor 15:29.
 - b. The Bible does not teach people will have an opportunity to be saved after death (Luke 16:19-31; Heb. 9:27).
 - c. Concerning baptism, the Scriptures teach:
 - (1). To be baptized Scripturally, one must be taught the Word of God (Rom 10:17; Jno 6:44,45; Heb 8:11; Rom 10:14; Acts 16:32).
 - (2). To be baptized Scripturally, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Jno 8:24; Mark 16:16; Heb 11:6; Acts 16:31).
 - (3). To be baptized Scripturally, one must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30-31).
 - (4). To be baptized Scripturally, one must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16; 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10).
 - d. A dead person cannot hear, believe, repent, or confess, therefore a dead person cannot be baptized.
 - e. Furthermore, these commands are personal commands, addressed to individuals; no one can obey these commands by proxy on behalf of another.

Conclusion:

- I. The Mormon Church is one of the fastest growing religious organizations in the world.

- A. The Mormon Church is an extremely wealthy organization that spends literally millions on advertising in an effort to recruit new members and to improve its image.
1. However, unlike mainstream religious denominations, Mormonism fits many of the qualifications of being a cult.
 2. The typical identifying marks of a cult are:
 - a. An excessively zealous and unquestioning commitment to its leader and (whether he is alive or dead) regards his belief system, ideology, and practices as the Truth, as law.
 - b. Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or even punished.
 - c. Leadership dictates, sometimes in great detail, how members should think, act, and feel (for example, members must get permission to date, change jobs, marry—or leaders prescribe what types of clothes to wear, where to live, whether or not to have children, how to discipline children, and so forth).
 - d. The group is preoccupied with bringing in new members.
 - e. Members are expected to devote inordinate amounts of time to the group and group-related activities.
 3. Young men are expected to give two years of their lives to missionary work supported by their families. Those who do not are not considered faithful Mormons.
 - a. Every year there are some estimated 50,000 Mormon missionaries working during their two-year "missions" to promote Mormon doctrine.
 4. However, what makes Mormonism more of a cult than most is its belief in extra-Biblical, so-called "inspired" writings that are not recognized or accepted by any other religious organization.
 - a. These include: The Book of Mormon, The Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price.

5. Therefore, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) is not some benign religious organization. It is clearly a threat to the cause of Christ around the world.

II. How to Convert a Mormon

- A. It is possible to convert Mormons to the truth of God's Word – although it is not easy. Here are some things you can do to help lead a Mormon to the truth.
 1. Bring to light Joseph Smith's numerous false prophecies (See: Deut 18:22).
 2. Stress passages such as Gal 1:6-9.
 3. Point out the scientific inaccuracies within the Book of Mormon.
 4. Ask Mormons what a person must do in order to be saved.
 5. Ask Mormon "elders" (who actually are single young men) about their wives and children (Titus 1: 5ff.).
 6. Ask why Mormonism contradicts itself. For example, it both advocates polygamy (Doctrine & Covenants 132:1) and condemns it (Jacob 2:24).
 7. If all people are eventually going to inhabit some part of Heaven (Doctrine & Covenants 76), why do Mormons carry out evangelism?
 8. Ask Mormons if they realize that the original Book of Mormon contained 4000+ grammatical errors and that Joseph Smith claimed to be the author and sole proprietor of the book.

Study Questions:

1. What was the vision Joseph Smith claimed to have had at the age of fourteen?

2. What was allegedly written on the golden plates Smith claimed to have unearthed, and how did he translate them?
3. Who is Solomon Spalding and what connection does he have to the Book of Mormon?
4. Briefly explain the Mormon "Adam-God" doctrine.
5. Briefly explain the Mormon concept of God the Father. How is this different from what the Bible teaches?
6. What do the Mormons teach about modern-day apostles and prophets in the church? What does the Bible say?

7. What is the Mormon view of heaven and hell? What does the Bible teach?
8. List a few of the problems with the Book of Mormon.
9. What do Mormons teach about Bishops, Elders and Deacons, and how does this differ from what the Bible teaches?
10. What is the Mormon teaching regarding marriage, and how does this differ from what Jesus taught?
11. What is the Mormon position on "baptism for the dead," and how does this differ from what the Bible teaches?