

**FREE!**

# Temple Square *visitor's guide*

Little known facts about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

***Not LDS***



**MormonInfo.Org**

Every year millions of people who are unfamiliar with the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the *LDS Church*) tour Temple Square with the hope of better understanding the fast-growing religion known as Mormonism.

When you step through the gates at Temple Square, you will be greeted by LDS Church missionaries who are sincerely eager to share what they believe is true. You may even be given the impression that the LDS Church is just another Christian denomination. In fact, as your tour the grounds, you will often hear words and phrases that are similar to those used by Christians. What you may not know is that the Mormon faith redefines historic Christian terms that have remained unchanged over the centuries, hence clouding their meaning.

Evangelical Christians who have spent years studying the LDS faith are providing this newspaper with the hope that it will enhance your understanding of Mormonism. As you will see, Mormonism is very different from biblical Christianity. In fact, LDS Church doctrine states that only Mormonism is true Christianity. We politely disagree.

As you read this paper, please notice that many of our quotations are taken word for word from LDS sources. We invite you to check these sources for contextual accuracy. If you have further questions, we hope that you will feel free to contact the person who handed this to you or one of the ministries listed on the back page of this handout.

# Joseph Smith and the "Great Apostasy"

A study of the Mormon Church cannot begin without first considering its founder, Joseph Smith, Jr. Born in 1805 in the state of Vermont, Smith claimed that both God the Father and Jesus Christ visited him when he was a young boy. Mormons refer to this event as the "First Vision."

A statue of Smith is located between the temple and the South Visitor's Center. Below this monument is a brief account of Smith's vision that the LDS Church officially claims took place in 1820. (There are actually several contradictory accounts of this story.)

Smith said one of these personages told him that all the Christian churches were wrong. In his personal history, Smith also claimed he was told that the creeds of Christendom "were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me...'" (*Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History* 1:19).

The plaque states that Smith "suffered martyrdom," even though he actually died in a gun battle while awaiting trial in Carthage, Illinois. Smith had been jailed for treason after ordering the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, a newspaper that had exposed Smith's poly-



Joseph Smith, Jr. The founder of the LDS church

gamous marriages, among other things. Before he was unjustly killed, Smith shot three of his attackers, two of whom died (*History of the Church* 7:101-103). The gun he used is on display in the museum located west of Temple Square.

Mormons are taught that God called Joseph Smith to "restore" true Christianity back to the earth after nearly 1800 years of "apostasy." To this day Mormons believe that theirs is the "only true and living church on the face of the whole earth" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 1:30).

## Apostate Christendom?

**LDS Seventy B.H. Roberts** – "Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (*Documentary History of the Church* 1:XL).

**LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie** – "Christianity is the religion of the Christians. Hence, true and acceptable Christianity is found among the saints [Mormons] who have the fullness of the gospel, and a perverted Christianity holds sway among the so-called Christians of apostate Christendom" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed., p.132).

**Book of Mormon** – "And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth" (*1 Nephi* 14:10).

## — Latter-day Saints Glossary of Terms —

The following glossary will help you better understand some of the terms used by the missionaries on Temple Square.

- **Apostasy** – The belief that true Christianity ceased after the death of Christ's apostles and was not restored until the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Joseph Smith.
- **Atonement** – Believed by Mor-

mons to have paved the way for all mankind to be resurrected from the dead.

- **Baptism for the dead** – An temple ordinance designed for the salvation of those who died without hearing the LDS gospel.
- **Book of Mormon** – A book said to have been translated by Joseph Smith from golden plates buried by

Moroni in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. It tells the story of the ancient Americans and depicts Jesus as appearing on this continent after His resurrection and ascension.

- **Eternal Life** – Synonymous with becoming a God or exaltation.

the **Christus** north visitor's center



A replica of Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen's famous 11-foot statue of the Christus portraying a hands-extended Jesus Christ is displayed in the North Visitor's Center. It is common for tour guides in this building to insist that theirs is a Christian church and that Jesus plays a prominent role in their theology. After all, they often point out, their church even has Jesus in its official name.

Unfortunately what the guides will not tell you is that Mormonism's perspective of Jesus is different from the historic Christian view. This was admitted by Apostle Bruce R. McConkie who once stated, "And virtually all the millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed., p. 269).

When asked if he believed in the traditional Christ, President Gordon B. Hinckley flatly said, "No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak" (*Church News*, 20 June 1998, p. 7).

He also said, "We acknowledge without hesitation that there are differences between us [and other faiths]. Were this not so there would have been no need for a restoration of the gospel" (*Ensign*, May 1998, p. 4).

If LDS leaders claim that Christianity's Jesus is different from theirs, then just who is Jesus according to Mormonism?

First, the LDS Jesus is the pre-incarnate "Jehovah" who was the literal son of Elohim, which is the Mormon name for God the Father. Mormons are taught that God the Father was "once a man like us" who became the God he is today by learning "all the principles of exaltation" (*Gospel Principles*, 1997 ed., p.305).

Christians believe that God is a God of spirit (John 4:24). Mormons, on the other hand, are taught that God currently inhabits a resurrected body of "flesh and bones as tangible as man's" (D&C 130:22) and that all people on this earth are "literally the sons and daughters of Deity" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516).

Since Mormonism's Lucifer (Satan) was also a son of Elohim, Jesus and Lucifer are considered to be "two brothers... sons of Elohim" (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 34).

Christians have never believed that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers. Instead the Bible says that Jesus is the creator of all things, including Lucifer himself (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17).

Second, the earthly body of the Mormon Jesus was conceived when Elohim physically impregnated Mary. In contrast, the Bible teaches that the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary in a nonphysical supernatural way in what is called the Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). Consider the following quotations:

"The [LDS Church] proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the most literal sense. The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh was sired by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father" (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 7).

"Thus, God the Father became the literal father of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father" (Official LDS handbook *Gospel Principles*, 1997 ed., p. 64).

"...how are children begotten? I answer just as Jesus Christ was begotten of his father... We must come down to the simple fact that God Almighty was the Father of His Son Jesus Christ. Mary, the virgin girl, who had never known mortal man, was his mother. God by her begot His son Jesus Christ..." (*Family Home Evening Manual*, 1972, pp. 125-126).

"The official doctrine of the Church is that Jesus is the literal offspring of God. He's got 46 chromosomes: 23 came from Mary, 23 came from God the Eternal Father" (BYU professor Stephen E. Robinson in the video *The Mormon Puzzle*).

Finally, unlike the biblical Jesus who is eternally God and therefore perfect, the Mormon Jesus had to "work out his own salvation" (McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah* 1:417). In the words of Apostle Russell M. Nelson, "Jesus attained perfection following his resurrection..." (*Ensign*, November 1995, p. 87).

The idea that Jesus "attained" perfection troubles Christians who believe that Jesus is truly God in the flesh (Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16). These above-stated reasons show the biblical insufficiency of the Mormon message.

the **Mormon "Gospel"**

One of the defining teachings of the historic Christian faith is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone. Mormon leaders have historically ridiculed the notion that faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ is enough to completely forgive the sinner's debt of sin.

In his book *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (hereafter *Miracle*), LDS President Spencer W. Kimball declared that "one of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God, that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation" (p.206).

James Faust, second counselor to the First Presidency, reinforced this error when he stated in a conference message, "Many people think they need only confess that Jesus is the Christ and then they are saved by grace alone. We cannot be saved by grace alone, for we know that it is by grace that we are saved after all we can do" (*Ensign*, November 2001, p.18, as quoted in the *Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 25:23).

If a Mormon hopes to achieve eternal life (otherwise known as exaltation or godhood), he must seek it through his own good works. Kimball explained that "this progress towards eternal life is a matter of achieving perfection." Only by "living all of the commandments" can a person be "guaranteed total forgiveness of sins" (*Miracle*, p.208).

Kimball likened salvation to climbing a ladder. "Each command we obey sends us another rung up the ladder to perfected manhood and godhood," he wrote, "and every law disobeyed is a sliding toward the bottom where man merges into the brute world" (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.153). The question is, does any Mormon know how tall this ladder is or what rung he is actually on?

Such a belief is opposed to the New Testament message. In fact, the apostle Paul strongly condemned such a plan in his letter to the Galatians (i.e. 1:6; 3:3, 10-11; 5:4-5).

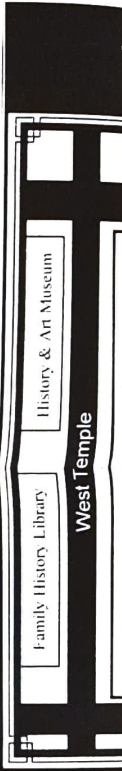
While true Christians should acknowledge God's desire for them to live a holy life, Paul made it clear that it was not by "works of righteousness" whereby mankind is saved. Instead it is an act of mercy on God's part (Titus 3:5). His grace is fully sufficient, and His atonement fully pardons.

In Mormonism, the atonement only cleanses on the condition of continued good works. Kimball claimed that repentance is not complete "when one merely tries to abandon sin"; rather, the Mormon must reach a point "where the desire or urge to sin" is cleared out of his life. He stated that forgiveness "is not granted merely for the asking. There must be works - many works." He added, "Discontinuance of sin must be permanent" (*Miracle*, pp. 164, 176, 355).

It truly seems hopeless since Mormon scripture states that a Mormon's "former" sins return when he recommit the same sin (*Doctrine and Covenants* 82:7).

Can any Mormon claim that the urge to sin has been cleared out of his life? Has any Mormon permanently discontinued sinning? If the Bible is true, then it is certain that no human has ever accomplished what this Mormon prophet required.

The Bible declares that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Paul wrote in Romans 3:23 that everyone has "sinned and come short of the glory of God." There is nothing anyone can do to merit salvation. We have no choice but to come to God on His terms and trust in the fact that He alone is able to forgive sins apart from our merit.



the **Book of Mormon**

another testament of Jesus Christ?

While touring Temple Square, you will probably hear many missionaries mention their sacred book called the *Book of Mormon*. This book, said to be translated from "Reformed Egyptian" characters on gold plates, includes the story of a man named Mormon who allegedly lived in the Americas during the fifth century.

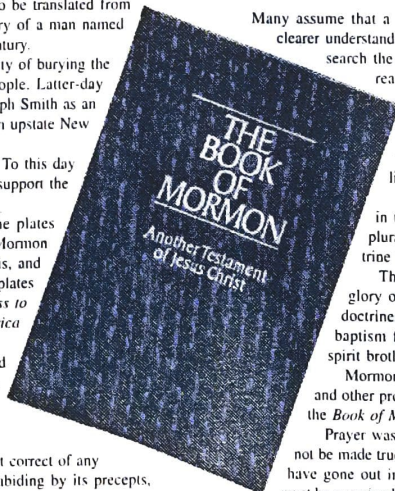
Mormon is said to have given his son Moroni the responsibility of burying the plates containing a record of the "Nephite" and "Lamanite" people. Latter-day Saints believe that it was this same Moroni who appeared to Joseph Smith as an angel in 1823 to tell him where to find the plates that he buried in upstate New York several centuries earlier.

The *Book of Mormon* speaks of great civilizations and cities. To this day no archaeological evidence has been found in the New World to support the story.

Most LDS paintings that depict Joseph Smith translating the plates show him in a prayerful position. Several contemporaries of the Mormon prophet tell a much different story. David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and even Smith's brother William all testified that Smith translated the plates with the use of a magic rock known as a "seer stone" (*An Address to all Believers in Christ*, p.12; *A New Witness for Christ in America* 2:417; *Comprehensive History of the Church* 1:129).

Smith would place the stone inside a hat and characters would magically appear. He would then read the "translation" to a scribe. However, much of the material found in the *Book of Mormon* was plagiarized, including large portions from the King James Version of the Bible.

Joseph Smith declared that the *Book of Mormon* was the "most correct of any book on earth" and that a person "would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.194).



Many assume that a person who reads the *Book of Mormon* will receive a clearer understanding of LDS doctrine. The problem is that a person could search the entire *Book of Mormon* from cover to cover and never read about the many doctrines clearly separating Mormonism from Christianity.

We are not given the impression that the characters and heroes mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*, as fictional as they are, would have held to the teachings believed by modern Latter-day Saints.

For instance, there is no hint that the people mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* thought God was once a man or a plurality of Gods existed. No passage supports the LDS doctrine that men could become Gods in the next life.

The *Book of Mormon* never talks about three degrees of glory or that marriage can last for "time and all eternity." The doctrines of human spirit pre-existence and eternal progression, baptism for the dead, and the notion that Jesus and Lucifer are spirit brothers are also suspiciously missing from this book.

Mormon missionaries like to have potential converts ignore these and other problematic areas. Instead they instruct people to pray about the *Book of Mormon* based on a statement made in Moroni 10:4.

Prayer was never meant to erase facts. Something that is false cannot be made true by prayer. The Bible warns us that "many false prophets have gone out into the world." Therefore the words of the LDS leaders must be examined to see if they will stand up to biblical scrutiny (1 John 4:1; Galatians 1:8; 2 Corinthians 11:4).

# the Temple

Constructed from granite taken from the Little Cottonwood Canyon several miles south of downtown Salt Lake City, this impressive building is the most important structure on Temple Square. Construction began in 1853 and was finished 40 years later.

The LDS Church has since built more than 100 temples scattered throughout the world. Nobody but "worthy" Mormons who hold "temple recommends" are allowed inside these buildings to perform sacred/secret rituals for themselves and those who are dead.

Some of the requirements to get a temple recommend include a faithful payment of a 10% tithe of a member's gross income and abstaining from hot drinks such as coffee and tea. Participants vow to never discuss the particulars of the ceremony; those who do risk being disciplined or even

excommunicated.

The ceremonies performed in the temple are said to actually parallel what went on in the Jerusalem temple of ancient times. Mormon Apostle Mark E. Petersen claimed, "Following the pattern of Biblical days, the Lord again in our day has provided these ordinances for the salvation of all who will believe, and directs that temples be built in which to perform those sacred rites" (*Why Mormons Build Temples*, p. 2).

The biblical evidence does not support this idea. Consider the different practices listed below with no biblical precedent from Bible times.

### Marriage for time and all eternity

Mormons are taught that a marriage relationship "sealed" in a temple can extend beyond death and into eternity. Couples believe that such a marriage is a primary step to becoming Gods and Goddesses in the next life. If they live worthy mortal lives, they believe that they will also be given their own world(s) to rule over just as they believe their God rules over this world.

However, there is no historical or biblical evidence to suggest that marriages were ever performed in the Jerusalem temple. Such a suggestion also contradicts the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:23-33.

### Plural marriage

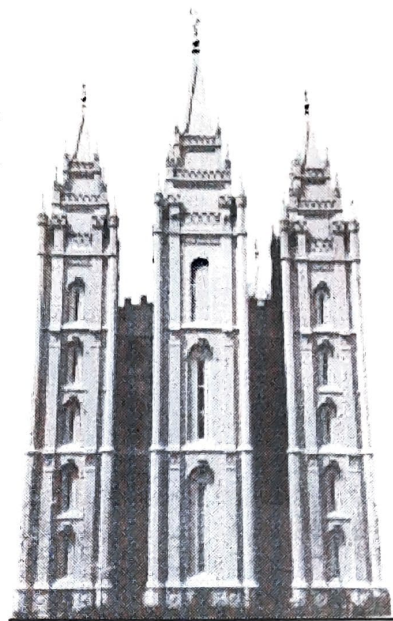
You may have heard of people who practice polygamy (marriage of one man with more than one wife) in the state of Utah. These people belong to groups that are not part of the LDS Church today. Before 1890, however, polygamy was not only tolerated by Mormon leaders but also encouraged. In fact, temple marriage was closely associated with polygamy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Even though the LDS Church does not officially sanction polygamous relationships today, this doctrine is anything but a dead issue in LDS theology. According to page 578 of the book *Mormon Doctrine*, "Obviously the holy practice will commence again after the Second Coming..."

### Baptism for the dead

Baptism for the dead is the most often performed ritual in LDS temples. Since Mormonism teaches that water baptism is essential for salvation, Mormons feel compelled to perform baptisms by proxy on behalf of dead relatives, acquaintances, and even notable personalities of the past.

Mormons are taught that those for whom the ordinance is performed will have a chance to embrace the teachings of the LDS Church in the next life. Joseph Smith said that this work was the "greatest responsibility in this world" for LDS members. Those who neglect it, he said, "do it at the peril of their own salvation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp.193, 356).



Mormons assume that baptism for the dead was a New Testament practice. They often quote the apostle Paul who, according to 1 Corinthians 15:29, stated, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

History does not support the idea that the rite Paul mentioned was similar to what Mormons practice today. He distinguished himself and other Christians from them by using the third person pronoun *they* in this verse rather than the first person *we* and *us* used throughout the passage both before and after verse 29.

Also, if such an ordinance is so important for salvation, then it seems very strange that no other passage in the Bible (or the *Book of Mormon*, for that matter) supports it.

Mormons have been baptized for many famous dead people. Among these are David Ben Gurion, Menachem Begin, Napoleon Bonaparte, Christopher Columbus, Albert Einstein, Anne Frank, Frederick the Great, Adolph Hitler, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Lord Horatio Nelson, Sir Walter Scott, Leo Tolstoy, George Washington, and William Wordsworth.

### The endowment ceremony

Latter-day Saints who hope to become Gods in the next life must take part in a ritual known as the temple endowment. Participants known as *patrons* are taught secret handshakes and passwords (known as *tokens* and *keywords*) that they feel are essential to get back into the presence of their God.

Brigham Young taught: "Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell" (Oration delivered on laying the South-East Cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple, April 1853. Also quoted in the *Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 416).

### Visitations from the dead

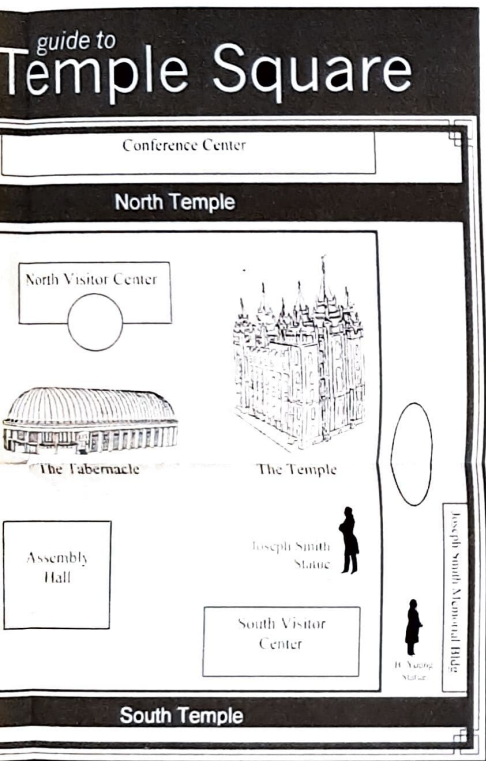
Fourth LDS Prophet Wilford Woodruff told followers in 1887, "The dead will be after you, they will seek after you as they have after us in St. George [a temple in southern Utah]" (*Journal of Discourses* 19:229).

Human communication with the dead, or necromancy, is always condemned in the Bible (i.e. 1 Samuel 15:23, 28:6ff). Such a practice was punishable by death in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 28:9).

Despite these grave warnings, many temple Mormons anticipate visitations by spirits of the dead. In fact, there are several published LDS books that record the sightings of dead spirits who have visited Mormons in LDS temples.

### The Christian view

Christians as well as Jews believe that the temple of Bible times was a place to perform Old Testament blood sacrifices. These blood sacrifices were foreshadows of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (Hebrews chapters 9 and 10). The temple as created by the LDS Church contains ordinances that are unique and much different than from biblical times.



## the brigham young statue

Between Temple Square and the Joseph Smith Memorial Building is a statue honoring Brigham Young. Born in 1801, Young was baptized into the LDS Church on April 14th, 1832. Following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, Young became Mormonism's second president, holding that position for 33 years.

The fact that LDS leaders still laud this man as a prophet of God and encourage their members to "follow his example" (*Church News*, 6/9/01, p.16) should cause grave concern for Christians everywhere since Young is responsible for some of the most unorthodox teachings imaginable.

For example, in 1857 he taught that Jesus Christ "was more or less contaminated with fallen nature" and that Christ was "influenced by this nature that we have received" (*Journal of Discourses* 6:95-96). In 1859 he confessed that his God was "once a man in mortal flesh" (*Journal of Discourses* 7:333), a belief originally taught by Joseph Smith in 1844.

Young also taught that "every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are." Even he could not go there "without his [Smith's] consent" (*Journal of Discourses* 7:289).

In 1852 Young declared that his Lord created mankind "for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself... we are born for the express purpose of growing up from the low estate of manhood, to become Gods like unto our Father in

heaven" (*Journal of Discourses* 3:93). Though Mormons still believe that men can become Gods, Young insisted that this reward was only for "those who enter into polygamy" (*Journal of Discourses* 11:269).

Unlike the more politically correct LDS Church of today, Young did not hold back in making it clear that those outside his church were not true Christians. In 1863 he insisted that the reason Mormons "differ from other Christians, as they are called, it is simply because they [non-Mormons] are not Christians as the New Testament defines Christianity" (*Journal of Discourses* 10:230). In fact, he taught that "the Christian world, so-called, are heathens as to their knowledge of the salvation of God" (*Journal of Discourses* 8:171).

Some Latter-day Saints easily dismiss the hard teachings of Brigham Young by claiming that he was merely giving his personal opinion. However, Young did not feel his comments should be taken lightly.

He declared, "I am here to give this people, called Latter-day Saints, counsel to direct them in the path of life... If there is an Elder here, or any member of this Church, called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who can bring up the first idea, the first sentence that I have delivered to the people as counsel that is wrong, I really wish they would do it, but they cannot do it, for the simple reason that I have never given counsel that is wrong; this is the reason" (*Journal of Discourses* 16:161).

# Doctrinal Comparison Chart

## LDS Definitions

### GOD THE FATHER:

1. He was once a man.
2. He is one of many Gods.
3. He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's (D&C 130:22).
4. He is married.

### JESUS CHRIST:

1. He is God's first spirit child and was not always God.
2. He is the spirit brother of Lucifer, Satan, the devil.
3. God, a resurrected man of flesh & bone, is his literal father; he was conceived in the same way that we were.

### MAN:

1. Men can become Gods with all the powers of Godhood.
2. His spirit is procreated by a Heavenly Father and Mother (preexistence). Later, he gets a body.

### SALVATION:

1. Almost everyone, even those who don't accept Christ, will eventually receive some degree of glory in one of three levels of heaven (D&C 76:31-44).
2. The blood of Christ does not atone for some grievous sins.
3. Eternal life with God is earned by works.

## Christian Definitions

### GOD THE FATHER:

1. He has always been God from eternity to eternity (Ps 90:2; Deut 33:27).
2. He is the only God who has ever existed (Is 43:10, 44:6; Heb 6:13).
3. He is a spirit and does not have flesh and bones (Jn 4:24; Col 1:15-16; Lk 24:39).
4. The Bible says nothing about God having a wife.

### JESUS CHRIST:

1. He has always been God. He has no beginning, no end (Jn 1:1; Is 44:24 with Col 1:16; Ex 3:14 with Jn 8:58; Is 9:6; Rev 1:8, 22:13; Ps 90:2).
2. He is Lucifer's Creator (Col 1:16-17).
3. He appeared in a body by miraculous conception, not by a physical act (Mat 1:18-23).

### MAN:

1. Men cannot become Gods. There is only one true God (Is 43:10, Is 44:6, Is 48:11-12).
2. His spirit is created within him by God, who created everything by himself, alone (Zec 12:1; Is 42:5 with Jn 3:6; Is 44:24; Is 45:5).

### SALVATION:

1. Those who reject the true Christ will be damned (John 8:24; 14:6).
2. Christ has perfected, forever, those who trust (follow) him (Heb 10:10-18).
3. Eternal life with God is a gift, not earned. Good works follow salvation (Eph 2:8-10; Gal 2:16-21; Rom 11:5-6; Tit 3:4-6).

# the Tabernacle

Visit the silver-domed Tabernacle in the center of Temple Square and you will be treated to its unique acoustics. Four guides demonstrate how even a dropped pin can be heard with relative ease. But dropping pins are not the only sounds that have been heard in this building. For years members of the LDS Church have sat and listened to messages that certainly do not fall under the classification of Christian teaching.

For instance, it was here in 1857 when Wilford Woodruff proclaimed, "God Himself is increasing and progressing in knowledge, power, and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end (Journal of Discourses 6:120).

In 1852 Brigham Young taught a similar doctrine when he said that his God could "continually ascend to greater heights of perfection" (Journal of Discourses 1:93).

During the height of the Civil War, Young also taught, "If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain [a person of African heritage], the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so" (Journal of Discourses 10:110).

Until recently, the Tabernacle was also home to biannual conference meetings. According to page 47 of the LDS Church manual entitled *Gospel Principles*, "When a prophet speaks for God, it is as if God were speaking."

Messages given by "living prophets" in conference are to be accepted by members as scripture (pp 47, 55). However, this promise has not hindered current LDS leaders from rejecting teachings that previous LDS prophets taught.

For instance, it was here that Young, while speaking in conference in 1852, gave his famous Adam-God sermon in which he proclaimed that Adam is "our Father and our God" and "the only God with whom we have to do" (Journal of Discourses 1:50).

Speaking in conference in 1960, Spencer Kimball taught that Indian children who were placed in the LDS "home placement program in Utah are often shades lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservations."

Kimball was referring to 2 Nephi 30:6 in the *Book of Mormon* that taught how dark-skinned Lamanites who embraced Mormonism would eventually become "a white and a delightful people."

Kimball actually said these aforementioned children "are fast becoming a white and delightful people." If it was really happening, it seems odd that the LDS Church would eventually change the word "white" in this passage to read "pure."

It was also here in a special conference in 1852 where LDS Apostle Orson Pratt was asked by Brigham Young to openly announce the subject of "a plurality of wives."

The last conference to be held in the Tabernacle was in October of 1999. Since then conferences have been held in the 21,000-seat auditorium located across the street from Temple Square.

## Glossary continued from Page 1

- **Heaven** - Mormonism teaches that there are three heavens known as the three degrees of glory. Only the hardest working and most perfect Mormons can reach the highest level, or celestial kingdom. Other heavenly realms are the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms.
- **Heavenly Father** - A glorified, perfected, resurrected human being who has a body of flesh and bones.
- **Holy Ghost** - One of Heavenly Father's literal spirit sons.
- **Jesus Christ** - The firstborn spirit child of God the Father whose earthly body was personally sired by God Himself.
- **Joseph Smith** - The founder of the Mormon Church who claimed that he saw both God the Father and Jesus Christ.
- **King James Bible** - The official version of the Bible used by Mormons, but according to LDS doctrine, the Bible contains many errors and is true

only "as far as it is translated correctly."

- **LDS** - Abbreviation for Latter-day Saint(s).
- **Mormon** - A character in the *Book of Mormon* as well as a nickname given to early Latter-day Saints.
- **Mormon (or LDS) Church**: Synonymous with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- **Moroni** - A character in the *Book of Mormon* (son of Mormon). His image is found on top of most LDS temples, including the Salt Lake temple.
- **Pre-existence** - The doctrine that all mankind lived with God as his spirit children before coming to earth in physical form.
- **Restoration** - The act by which God returned true Christianity (the LDS Church) to the earth in 1830 through Joseph Smith.
- **Standard Works** - The four written scriptures used by the LDS Church. These include the Bible, *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*.

# the Testaments

East of Temple Square is the 500-seat Legacy Theater located in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building where the film *The Testaments - One Cold and One Shepherd* is being shown. The film's script, which was approved by the LDS First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, is intended to bolster the *Book of Mormon* claim that there was a group of people living in the Western Hemisphere who were anxiously awaiting the birth of Jesus the Messiah in the east.

The film jumps back and forth between actual events in Palestine during Jesus' mortal ministry and those thought to have possibly taken place simultaneously in the New World.

### Geographical confusion

LDS Church leaders claim that the *Book of Mormon* is a true history of real people known as Nephites and Lamanites, yet they have provided no official position as to where these people actually lived or produced any New World evidence to support the places mentioned in this book.

A caption at the beginning of the film tells viewers that this story takes place "somewhere in the Americas"; however, grand scenes depicting Mayan-styled temples make it clear the producers of the film wanted to give the impression that these events took place in Central America.

Not all LDS leaders have held such a position. For instance, tenth LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith was very critical of the Central American theory and insisted that the *Book of Mormon* lands were located in upstate New York (*Doctrines of Salvation* 3:234). This agrees with LDS leaders such as Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, and David Whitmer, all of whom gave the *Book of Mormon* a North American setting.

Thirteenth LDS President Ezra Taft Benson stated, "Consider how fortunate we are to be living in this land of America...This was the place of three former civilizations: that of Adam, that of the Jaredites, and that of the Nephites" (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp.587-588).

### Historical anomalies

The film attempts to sidestep many of the historical problems in the *Book of Mormon*. For instance, the Nephites and Lamanites in the *Book of Mormon* are credited with having haxed the wheel and are said to have used animals such as the horse and ox as beasts of burden between 600 B.C. and A.D. 384.

Either 9:19 between 2247 B.C. and A.D. 384 also claims that elephants existed in the Western Hemisphere. No doubt the producer of the film knew that some viewers might grow suspicious should his characters ride in chariots or on horses (Alma 18:9-12; 3 Nephi 3:22) or even on the backs of elephants. To solve this problem, no such animals are used in the film and no wheels are seen.

The *Book of Mormon* mentions the use of steel weapons yet no such instruments are shown in the film.

First Nephi 1:2 states that Nephi made his "record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians." However, the film depicts no characters similar to what Mormons call "Reformed Egyptian." Instead Mayan-like glyphs are used.

### Skin color

The LDS Church has historically taught that skin color had much to say about the spirituality of a people group. For instance, those of African heritage were actually banned from holding any priesthood position in the church until 1978. This spiritual restriction was imposed on them for being "less valiant" in what Mormons call the pre-existent "war in heaven" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966 ed., p. 527) Blacks could be members of the LDS Church, but they were denied the Mormon priesthood and thus not allowed entry into Mormon temples.

The *Book of Mormon* mentions in 2 Nephi 5:21 how God had "cursed" some of the *Book of Mormon* characters who had hardened their hearts. Whereas once their skin was "white, and exceedingly fair and delightful," God caused "a skin of blackness to come upon them." In order to draw viewers away from this unique *Book of Mormon* teaching, all characters have dark skin with the exception of those who are shown in the scenes taking place in the Holy Land.

It seems clear that LDS authorities are aware of these anomalies and are purposely trying to conceal them from viewers.

## Would you like more information?

The following Christian ministries would be glad to answer any questions you may have:

- Mormonism Research Ministry (CA), (619) 447-3873, [www.mrm.org](http://www.mrm.org)
- Berean Christian Ministries (NY), [bcmmin@frontiernet.net](mailto:bcmmin@frontiernet.net), [www.frontiernet.net/~bcmmin](http://www.frontiernet.net/~bcmmin)
- Word for the Weary (MN), (952) 937-0934, [www.answoringods.org](http://www.answoringods.org)
- Watchman Fellowship (IL), (773) 381-5086, [www.watchman.org](http://www.watchman.org)
- Evidence Ministries (TX), (210) 340-TRUE, [www.evidenceministries.org](http://www.evidenceministries.org)
- Ex-Mormon Christian (WA), [exmormon@integrityol.com](mailto:exmormon@integrityol.com), <http://exmormon.net>
- He Is Savior Ministries (UT), (801) 943-5011, [www.members.tripod.com/hisimn](http://www.members.tripod.com/hisimn)
- Freedom In Truth Outreach, (541) 549-6939, [litong@hotmail.com](mailto:litong@hotmail.com)
- Jude 3 Missions (CA), [www.mormon.web.com](http://www.mormon.web.com)
- Utah Gospel Mission (UT) [www.mormonism.web.com](http://www.mormonism.web.com)
- Utah Lighthouse Ministry (UT), (801) 485-8894, [www.utm.org](http://www.utm.org)
- Tekton Apologetics Ministries, [jphold@earthlink.net](mailto:jphold@earthlink.net), [www.tektonics.org](http://www.tektonics.org)
- Nauvoo Christian Visitor's CTR (IL), (217) 453-2372, [ncvc@nauvoo.net](mailto:ncvc@nauvoo.net)
- Mission to Mormons (IL), (217) 453-6036, [www.mission2mormons.org](http://www.mission2mormons.org)
- Christian Research & Counsel, (727) 327-0062, [tomstpete@net](mailto:tomstpete@net)
- Truth in Love Ministries, [tl@atlbi.com](mailto:tl@atlbi.com), [www.truth-in-love.org](http://www.truth-in-love.org)
- Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry, [carmorg3@hotmail.com](mailto:carmorg3@hotmail.com), [www.carm.org](http://www.carm.org)